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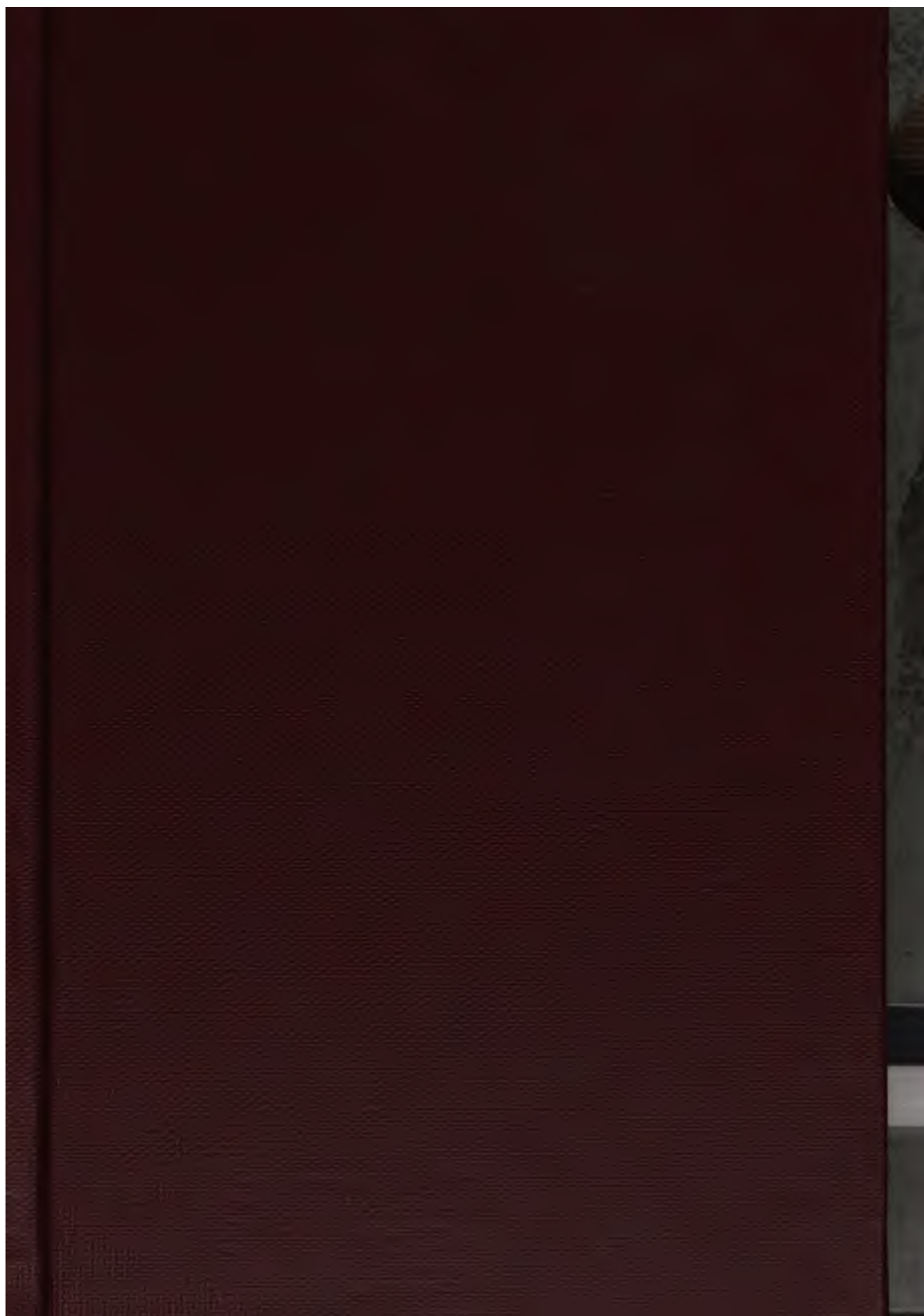
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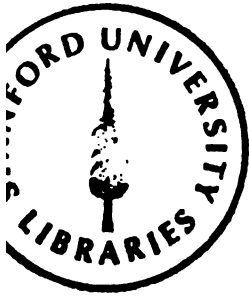
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SHIRLEY BROOKS

# Charles Brooks

Fourth

BY

WILLIAM C. BROWN

Author of "The Story of the

REPUBLICAN PARTY



NEW YORK

MENYER HOLLAND COMPANY

1887

1887



# Shirley Brooks of Punch

*HIS LIFE, LETTERS, AND DIARIES*

BY

GEORGE SOMES LAYARD

*Author of "Charles Keene of 'Punch,'" etc.*

WITH DECORATIVE INITIALS AND EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS



NEW YORK  
HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

1907

*mi*



## Preface



UTILITY and pleasure demand a word of thanks to those who have lent their co-operation in the production of this book. First and foremost must be mentioned Mr. Henry Silver, an early friend and colleague of the subject of this Biography, lacking whose generous contributions this volume would be shorn of a great part of the value which I hope it may possess. Next must be mentioned

my friend, Mr. M. H. Spielmann, without whose "History of *Punch*" the biographer of a *Punch* man would be like a sailor in an oarless boat on an uncharted sea. Others whom I cannot sufficiently thank are Mr. H. C. Venning, Lieut.-Colonel Gaskell, Mrs. Jopling Rowe, Mr. Frith, R.A., Sir Francis Burnand, Miss Fergusson, Mr. Herbert Jones of Oswestry, the Messrs. Roche, the well-known London booksellers, Messrs. Macmillan & Co., Miss Matthews,



## PREFACE

Lady Romer, Mr. J. Parry Jones, Mrs. Panton, Miss Nathalie Brooks, Mr. Charles W. Brooks, Mr. H. W. Sabine, Mr. G. Goodman, Miss Ellen Terry, Mr. Sidney Jennings, Mr. W. L. Fleming, Mr. Donald Masson, Lady Hardman, Miss Ella Hepworth Dixon, Mr. James Murren, Mr. William Downing, Mr. W. H. Doeg, Mr. Florian Williams, Mr. C. L. Graves, Mr. George Dunlop, Mr. A. Abrahams, Mr. du Maurier, Miss Oakley, Dr. E. S. Tait, my friend, Mr. Walter Frith, who has most kindly looked through my proofs, and, last but not least, the Proprietors of *Punch*, who, besides putting letters at my disposal, have generously given me permission to make use of the delightful initial letters which adorn these pages. In conclusion, I should be wanting in common gratitude were I not to put on record the invaluable secretarial help I have received from Miss Marion Christopherson.

G. S. LAYARD.

*Bull's Cliff,*  
*Felixstowe, 1907.*

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A  
GREAT "PUNCH" EDITOR

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CHAPTER I

1815-1835—Birth—Scheme of Book—Early Influences—Oswestry  
—Law Studies.



HARLES WILLIAM, better known as SHIRLEY, BROOKS, was born on April 29th, 1815, at 52 Doughty Street, London, —a street, by the way, of some literary interest, for here Sydney Smith had lived, here at No. 48 Dickens wrote part of "The Pickwick Papers," here at No. 43 Edmund Yates lived, and Tegg, the publisher, opposite. He was the eldest

of the three sons of William Brooks, and Elizabeth, eldest daughter of William Sabine, of Islington. William Brooks was an architect of some note in his day, amongst his more important buildings

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\* The initial letters in this volume are reproduced from *Punch* by the generous kindness of the proprietors, Messrs. Bradbury and Agnew. In nearly every case they originally decorated "*Punch's* Essence of Parliament," with which Shirley Brooks's name will be always identified.



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

being the London Institute and "Dr. Fletcher's Chapel" in Finsbury Circus, Dudley Church, and the Church Missionary College. He is said to have belonged to a good old Nottinghamshire family whose pedigree could be traced back to Richard III, and included that Laurence Shirley, Earl of Ferrers, who, convicted of killing his steward, gaily drove to his place of execution behind six cream-coloured ponies. That Shirley Brooks put faith in this tradition seems likely from his adoption in later years of the "front," for it cannot be called the Christian, name by which he will always be known. There may, too, have been a further reason, but of that more will be said later.

William Brooks, Shirley's father (born Sept. 9th, 1786) was a member of the Goldsmiths' Company. The date of his marriage, which took place at St. Mary's, Islington, was October 16th, 1811, and Charles William (Shirley) was there baptized on June 14th, 1815.

As to the day of the month of Shirley's birth a few words must be added. At least one of his dearest friends drinks to his memory on St. George's Day, April 23rd, but in his diary for 1869 I find April 29th underlined in red ink and marked "Birthday," and by that I take my stand, particularly as birthdays were, as we shall see, matters in which to the end of his life he took the keenest interest. No doubt the confusion as to the day arose from his habit of alluding to "Shakespeare's and my birthday," which was one of his characteristic little jokes, and April 22nd or 23rd is that generally adopted as the birthday of the great

## BIRTH

dramatist. Curiously enough, by happy chance, I find him traversing the accuracy of this date in "*Punch's* Essence of Parliament" for April 30th, 1864, in the following words:—

"*Saturday. Mr. Punch* published his Tercentenary number in honour of Shakespeare, whose birthday this either was or was not, most likely the latter, firstly, because babies are not usually christened on the third day; secondly, because New-Style brings the alleged birthday to the 3rd of May, and, thirdly, because there was east wind in spite of the heat, and *Mr. Punch* had no mind to march in procession, or do anything except contemplate with ecstasy his own magnificent picture of his own Shakespearian procession."

From which it is easy to see that Shirley could make the date of Shakespeare's birthday coincide with his own without doing any very serious violence to historical accuracy.

Of Shirley Brooks's childhood and early youth there is little to record. The reasons for this it will be well to state at once, and they are rather tragical, seeing that he himself had taken particular pains from a very early date in his career to store up material for writing an autobiography which, judging from what has survived the general wreck, would, had his life been spared, have proved of outstanding interest.

By a strange and painful fate his immediate branch of the family has, in the thirty years since his death, been wiped off the face of the earth, and letters, diaries, and other treasured documents have been destroyed or scattered to the four winds. It is true that some have come to hand, and those by good fortune

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

of exceptional interest, but they are but the *disjecta membra* of what should have proved a complete body of very real importance and literary value. Owing to circumstances upon which it is unnecessary to dwell, but which reflect no discredit either on the subject of this biography or on his surviving relatives, those of the family who are now living had no personal intercourse with the Shirley Brookses. Thus it comes about that there was no one to become the natural depository of Shirley's literary remains, no one whose pious duty it was to preserve the memorials of his life and work. This is matter for regret and that is all that need be said.

Of Shirley's own intention to write his autobiography there can be no doubt. He had kept elaborate diaries for at least twenty-five years and had even gone so far as to make notes and excerpts from them in a separate volume expressly to that end. Here, too, he had identified much of his unsigned work, which cannot now be earmarked. Not that on this score we have much reason to complain, for it is rather with the man than with his literary work that we are concerned. Our chief regret at the loss of this epitome lies in the fact that, lacking it, we are faced with periods in his life concerning which little information is obtainable, and again other periods in which facts, sensations and experiences crowd upon us almost to bewilderment. Fortunately for us, the years immediately preceding his short editorship of *Punch*, and those crowning four years during which he controlled its destinies, are fully represented from his point of

## HIS REMAINS

view, and therein must lie the chief social and literary interest of this volume.

Some years after Shirley's death all his papers were deposited for safe custody with a well-known Oxford Street bookseller. Then, shortly before the last surviving member of the family disappeared into the wilds of Australia, they were with a few exceptions demanded back, and nothing more is known of them, except that certain of the diaries survived and, by devious routes, have come into my hands. That more may be in existence and may come to light now that interest in the man is stimulated is of course possible, but a very widely diffused request for material leads me to suppose that much cannot have escaped me.

One other source of indirect information has also been dried up. Amongst his most intimate and valued friends Shirley Brooks numbered the family of Mr. William Powell Frith, R.A. To the "Sissy" Frith of those days, now the well-known authoress Mrs. Panton, he was in the habit of sending for her amusement what he called the "waste-paper basket of *Punch*." This collection of letters and rejected manuscripts which would doubtless have thrown many a sidelight on this story, was preserved until after his death. Then the doubt arose whether much mischief might not result should they fall into the hands of anyone inclined to make unscrupulous use of them. Discretion, and a wise discretion as it eventually proved, determined on their destruction. And so another mine in which the biographer might have worked was closed down for ever.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

So much for what might have been. Now, one word as to the scope and aim of this biography.

Every one who knows anything about painting knows that oil pictures were in early days painted in black-and-white and then glazed, *i.e.*, overlaid with transparent colours, the result being what is technically called *chiaroscuro*. The moderns have changed all this and paint with solid colours, searching above all things for light. Something of the same obtains in biography. We are no longer satisfied with the bold outlines, the large aspects of a man's life. We want detail, we want to have the little lights and shadows playing about a man's character, not those great masses of light and shade, that make him appear an impossible paladin. I shall therefore make no apology for presenting Shirley Brooks in minute detail where I can, by means of his letters and diaries. For I am convinced that by thus putting on the real, solid colours I shall give a truer picture of the man than by ever so cleverly symbolising his not altogether heroic figure—no more heroic, I mean, than most other creatures of flesh and blood—by writing of him in the grand and impersonal manner of a Plutarch or the "Dictionary of National Biography." What he did I shall, of course, not ignore, but what he was it shall be my particular aim to depict. I do not want to hide Shirley Brooks behind his works. It would be better indeed than this to ignore his works altogether. The painter of Nature does not want so much to show Nature doing something, as Nature being something. And I would show my man as he was, not merely as

## EARLY INFLUENCES

he appeared to the world, doing his literary athletics in the *Man in the Moon*, *Punch*, the *Illustrated London News*, and his novels.

Of incident during Shirley's earliest years there is practically nothing that can be recovered.

Of the influences by which the boy was surrounded we gather something. His father was a man of strong religious and anti-Romish convictions. These were insisted upon in the text which he caused to be placed over a door of the chapel designed by him in Finsbury Circus. "There is but one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus," cut in stone, was a direct and uncompromising challenge to the hagiolatry of an adjoining Roman Catholic place of worship. That indicates the spirit of his father, and together with the fact that his mother was one of the Sabines, an old Nonconformist family, suggests the sort of moral atmosphere in which his early years were passed.

Of his appearance and character as a child we find Madame Dorini (Niemann) saying in later days that he was the most beautiful boy she ever saw—the kind of thing that people do say when a man has assumed a prominent position in the world. He himself wrote that he "was rather what a mother calls a 'pretty boy' and horribly intelligent. So people petted me and took me out to sights much sooner than was good for me. And I rapidly became a *blasé* little beast and found no fun in anything." And in one of his diaries he speaks of himself as having been "a scape-gracious sort of lad."

An entry in his diary for 1871 indicates further

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

religious influences. He has turned up a letter from "my dear old grandmother Sabine, dated Hastings, where she was with my father and aunts, Sept. 17th, 1827 . . . a most kind and piously written letter, 2¼ close sides of letter paper ending with a hope that I feel 'grateful that means are afforded you whereby you may become a useful member of society. That the Lord may bless you in whatever situation you may in future be placed is the sincere and earnest prayer of your affectionate grandmother, Elizabeth Sabine.' "

Of his education we have the rather indefinite information that he was educated at "a public school in the City," and more definitely that, probably before this, he passed through the hands of the Rev. T. J. Bennett, afterwards Sub-Dean of St. Paul's, "whose house was opposite to Charles Lamb's cottage on the banks of the New River."

From the meagreness of which details it is sufficiently obvious that, though we may discover what sort of man the boy grew into, we have not much to go upon as to the formative influences which conduced to his earlier development.

There is indeed nothing more to be said of him until the time arrived for choosing a profession.

On April 24th, 1832, when he was now in his seventeenth year, we find him serving his articles to his uncle, Charles Sabine, solicitor, of Oswestry, nominally for the term of five years.\*

This is the first important landmark in Shirley's life.

---

\* Apparently he went to Oswestry in 1830 and left in 1833.

## OSWESTRY

And fortunately for us, we have set down in black and white by his own hand something that will help us to a proper understanding of this great step, which was to land him "out of the nursery into the limitless world."

A quarter-of-a-century later he took Oswestry as the background of his novel, "The Gordian Knot," writing of it under the transparent pseudonym of "St. Oscars."

Of his first visit he wrote :—

"In the time when I first knew it we went thither by his Majesty's Mail—red coach—red guard—red driver—four spanking horses, which during the night were changed, as it seemed to the aroused sleeper, every five minutes—snorting horn at the turnpikes in the towns—horribly cold feet in the morning—very high fares—extortionate fees—good refreshment on the road—and everybody heartily glad when the business was over."

Plainly a method of travelling that had its drawbacks compared with the best corner in a first-class railway carriage, but it had its compensations. You saw England, you gained some idea of the face of the motherland. "And the few minutes of stoppage in the towns were, to anyone who knew how to use them, invaluable opportunities for fixing the towns in memory for the rest of one's life."

And Shirley was just the one, with his extraordinary memory for details, to make the most of such opportunities. He was already stowing away in his capacious brain material for future use in his destined



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

occupation. But at present Law was his objective, Journalism his unsuspected goal.

In those days Oswestry was something different from what it is now. At that time, a London newspaper was a luxury subscribed for by a group of neighbours, and then only arriving in the middle of the day following its publication. Now it boasts a newspaper of its own, and you can have the *Times* or *Daily Mail* on the morning of issue. Then it was a little self-contained world. Now it is, with the rest of England, just a suburb of London.

Charles Sabine, his uncle, was one of the most prominent members of the little community. Originally called to the Bar, he had abandoned the senior branch of the profession, and, becoming a partner in his grandfather's business in 1819, had ever since practised as a solicitor. A man of real culture, refined tastes and no mean literary ability, his influence upon the youth who was now to be so closely associated with him cannot be over-estimated.

Many are the stories still current of his eccentricities, his enthusiasms, his courage, his strong religious convictions. He held peculiar views as to the second coming of Christ. A spare cover was laid at every meal. Food and drink were left on the table every night, for Christ might revisit the world in the flesh at any moment !

He was small of stature and had his house fitted with low doorways to suit his height, which doorways, by the way, do not suit the height of its present occupant.

Both he and his father were collectors of old oak

## CHARLES SABINE

when few others took interest in such things. He was a Greek scholar, who never allowed his scholarship to rust for lack of use.

Here is Shirley's description of him under the transparent guise of "Henry Cheriton" in "The Gordian Knot": "For the oppressed he always stood forward as champion; but, a gentleman by birth and bearing, his advocacy never took an offensive attitude, and he never triumphed in its success. It was less an interference between patron and dependent, landlord and tenant, master and servant, than the removal of a misunderstanding, and an endeavour to convince each that the other had unrecognised good qualities." Many indeed complained that Mr. Sabine went out of his way to do work which was not germane to his business, "but such complaints passed him as the idle wind." He once remarked when told of such animadversions:—

"My profession is a larger one than some people seem to understand. It includes a general practice, for which I have a licence given from Jerusalem. I am sorry folks cannot read it but I can and I know my tether."

Highly strung by nature, he could yet nerve himself to conspicuous courage. Of slight strength and build, he seemed fearless in the presence of physical danger. Substituting Oswestry for "St. Oscars" and Charles Sabine for "Henry Cheriton," here is a story of him which the neighbourhood will never forget: "There was a time when disturbances broke out in the mining districts of more than one county adjoining that in

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

which Oswestry stands, and rough and grim r collected by the thousand at the sound of horns, he raving sermons by torchlight, and then marched i the towns and flooded them with violence and tum Rumours came that such a visit was to be paid Oswestry, and the magistracy, collecting what fc they could of yeomanry and constables, went out meet the rioters. With the authorities rode Sabine, and they took possession of a bridge upon road along which the enemy was to come. They ca in great force, armed with clubs and missiles, and up perceiving the small array of their opponents utte a yell of derision, and opened a galling shower of stor The Riot Act was read in dumb show, and the law men were thrown into confusion by the lawless or and would have speedily fled, when Mr. Sabine spur forward on a white horse, well known at many a hc where its master had halted to do good, and, riding i the ranks of the assailants, seized the leader. On high ridge of the bridge the whole crowd could see slight figure of the lawyer, who held his man in determined grip. Many of them knew him. Oth were daunted by the daring of the act, and there v no more stoning. He then addressed them, and i short, energetic speech pointed out the folly a wickedness of their acts, and warned them that, w the gentlemen of the district were earnest in th desire to assist the working men through their gri ances, no intimidation would be borne with. Th was something of Sabine's wonted kindness in address, and before it was well ended the man he l

## CHARLES SABINE

captured asked leave to speak, and mounting the parapet motioned to the mob to retreat. They obeyed."\*

There we have a picture of Charles Sabine as a man of action, but to leave him there would be to leave him in profile. For above all things he was a man of strong religious, though tolerant, conviction, one who loved the contemplative, whilst bowing to the necessity of an active life. By temperament an idealist, he braced himself to face realities. By temperament and practice a poet and to the last a trenchant pamphleteer, he gave the best of his strength to furthering the every-day interests of his clients. With eyes lifted to the stars, he had his feet set firmly on the earth. Compact of imagination, he excelled in soundness of judgment. Capable of fierce indignation, he could be playful, tender as a woman, full of humour.

An example may be given of the last. Shortly before his death he found a friend diligently counting his money. Affecting to retreat, he said with a twinkle in his eye, "Oh, I beg your pardon. I see I am disturbing *your devotions*!!" That was characteristic of the man, to gild a home-truth with a coating of laughter. As the writer of his obituary notice in the *Westminster Advertiser* well put it: "Spiritual religion was the great reality of his life. It crowned all his excellences and gave a happy flavour to his natural geniality. It combated all that was weak and faulty in him."

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\* *Vide* "The Gordian Knot."

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

Born of Nonconformist parents and throughout his life in formal fellowship with Dissent, he nevertheless approved of the Episcopacy and was a frequent worshipper and communicant in the Established Church. In this he was not singular amongst Nonconformists, not a few of whom approve of Church teaching but cannot away with Establishment. His sympathies were catholic, his most earnest wish the unity of the Church. He deprecated above all things the walls of partition in the fold of Christ. He looked for the good in things, not the evil. He held fast to what he believed to be the ultimate truth that "the whole church in heaven and earth are one." It was the mainspring of all he did and felt.

I have been the more particular to give a somewhat full account of Charles Sabine, seeing that, amongst Shirley Brooks's early influences, this remarkable man held foremost place. At the impressionable age of seventeen to be admitted to the intimacy of a man with such high ideals, such strong individuality and such marked literary taste, was no small piece of fortune for one who was soon to find himself adrift on the sea of life with good and evil on the right and on the left ready for him to choose from according to bias or inclination. Of his home influence we can but conjecture something. Of the influences brought to bear whilst under his uncle's roof we are able to gather not a little. And there is ample evidence to show that this influence was not without its effect on his character. Strenuously and actively engaged, as he was destined to be, in pursuits and under conditions very different

## RELIGIOUS INFLUENCES

from those which obtained at Oswestry, there is evidence in plenty to show that beneath the motley of the professional Jester, hidden from all but his more intimate friends, he ever wore that which reminded him that he was mortal. Living his life to the utmost, he yet was not slow to remember that death was round the corner. Which, after all, is only to say that the King of Jesters is very like other men, playing his part before the world, but torn with doubts in secret ; fighting to solve the great enigma ; as painfully and seriously engaged in the Battle of Life as the most serious and conscientious of those who think him but a merry-andrew. I do not wish to labour this, but we should read Shirley Brooks's life wrong were we not to bear in mind that there was through everything, in spite of much that was frivolous and trivial, this unsuspected undercurrent of Puritanism, perhaps I should rather say a sort of shame-faced piety, which touched bottom on a strong belief in the benevolence and love of the Creator. A sentence from one of his later diaries will show what I mean, though many others might be cited. It is preceded by the usual laconic "wrote for *Punch*" by which his life was at that time punctuated. "Had the pain in my side to-day but 'D.E.A.' (*vide* illumination in my bedroom)."

The pain warned him that he was mortal, but there was at any rate something to fall back upon—just the shortest confession of faith, illuminated for him by a little friend, framed and hung by his bed. Just "God is Love," Latinized in his diary, perhaps with a

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

sort of boyish reserve, into "D.E.A." (*Deus est Amor*), but showing, I think, the simple faith of the man who outwardly appeared just a thoughtless, worldly, laughter-loving wearer of the cap and bells.

Throughout his life Shirley looked back on his time at Oswestry with deep affection, and Oswestry reciprocated the sentiment, justifiably claiming him as one of its most distinguished sons, if only by adoption. Though one of the busiest of men, he never failed to communicate to his friends there anything in the papers or elsewhere bearing upon the history of a community which has always been remarkable for its pride and interest in local traditions and associations. "As a boy," wrote Mr. Askew Roberts, the editor of *By-gones*, the *Notes and Queries* of the Cambrian Border, "I remember the keen delight we always felt when Mr. Brooks came amongst us and took interest in our sports. We all loved him, and I have felt it indeed an honour for so many years to be favoured with communications from him. Although we Oswestrians have only had hasty glimpses of Mr. Brooks of late years" (*i.e.*, the sixties and seventies), "his death, to all who remember his residence here, has been like that of a friend." That was just it. As Jerrold said, "He had the faculty of holding people close to him. He had a princely memory. He never forgot a face he had seen nor the circumstances under which he had seen it. . . . This faculty of retention, applied industriously to literary pursuits by a man of fastidious taste, produced the thorough man of letters."

And Oswestry was in his mind as he lay on his

## SHROPSHIRE

death-bed. He had bestirred himself to do something for *Punch*, and with his dying hand penned a set of "Election Epigrams." One of these ran :—

"The pen that now congratulates thee, Cotes,  
Helped to secure thy sire North Shropshire votes,"

recalling the fact that the Mr. Cotes just elected in 1874 for Shrewsbury was the son of the Mr. Cotes elected more than forty years before for North Shropshire. The powerful brain was fighting against the decay of the nearly worn-out body. It recalled how he had, as a boy, repeated the phrase "Lord Clive's Twelve Apostles" applied to the then twelve members of Parliament for the county, and how he had been remonstrated with for his profanity. It recalled how he had ridden out to canvass Lord Godolphin's tenants only to find that Lord Clive had ordered them to vote for Sir R. Hill and Major Gore, a command which they were firmly resolved to obey. And it recalled little more before it fell into its last, deep sleep.

When, in 1859, Charles Sabine died, Shirley showed his high appreciation of his friend and uncle, and that delicate sympathy which was one of his notable characteristics, by the following letter written to his cousin, Miss Margaret Sabine. After the usual condolences he proceeds :—

"June 28th, 1859.

"Mr. Minshall, it seems, wrote the notice in the *Oswestry Advertiser*. Some day (if the thought has not already occurred to you) I would suggest that *you* might find happiness in preparing some little separate memorial of our lost one. No one would (or *could*) do it so well. And if the idea pleases you, and



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

you do decide on it, you shall let *me* have this part in the matter, that I have the bringing it out, through the house of my friends, Messrs. Bradbury & Evans, who will do it every justice for my sake and yours. Its cost to you (we *must* speak of such things) shall be *the postage of your MS. to me*—beyond that, not one coin. Think of the plan, dear Margaret, when your mind is calmed for it. It would give me so much gratification to be your agent in such a work.

“Emily\* sends her kindest love to my aunt and yourself, and looks gladly forward to the time when she shall meet you. So do I.

“Lastly and leastly, the new periodical *Once a Week*, which Mr. Dickens’s conduct has almost compelled his old partners to begin, and with which I am closely associated, is published this week. Upon *my* ‘free list’ I have placed your name, and I hope that it will not be unacceptable to you to receive the work. We hope to make a valuable ‘property’ of it—the *artistic* talent will be very strong. But it is an experiment.

“While I write (in the Temple) there is a great cannonade at both ends of London. Something to be thankful for that it is only in honour of the coronation anniversary, and nothing like Solferino, of which, of course, everybody is talking, and desiring details. The carnage seems to have been terrible, and the famous ‘Quadrilateral’ of fortresses, the pride and hope of Austria, has been broken into. How far the reflection will console the households at home, whose heads are lying beside the Chiese and the Mincio, one dares not guess. Thank Heaven for our wall of sea.

“Ever, my dear Margaret,

“Your affectionate cousin,

“CHARLES S. BROOKS.”

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\* Mrs. Shirley Brooks.

## TALFOURD

A few years before, when Shirley was but new to the ranks of *Punch*, he had remembered Mr. Sabine's friendship with Talfourd, and catching at the chance of affording his uncle gratification and at the same time paying a proper tribute to that remarkable combination of judge, dramatist and poet, had penned the verses from which the following may be quoted :—

“ Dead ! He should have died hereafter,  
Time had come for such a word,  
When the day of fight was over,  
And the triumph-bells were heard.  
Statesman—Minister of Justice—  
Friend of all who needed friend,  
Poet—might he not have tarried,  
Seen our conflict to the end ?

\* \* \* \*

Gallant heart ! But happier, nobler,  
Hold the doom 'twas his to meet,  
Who—declaring Heaven's own message—  
Died upon the judgment seat.  
On his lip that holy lesson  
All his life had taught, he cried,  
' Help the humble, help the needy—  
Help with Love.' So Talfourd died ! ” \*

Not great verses—indeed, mere journalese—but prompted by feelings of affection and hero-worship pre-eminently characteristic of the writer.

Shirley further showed his affection for Oswestry by contributing in 1848 a story entitled “ The Clansman ; A Tale of the Rebellion,” to *Oswald's Well*, a short-lived local magazine. It concluded in the December number with these words :—

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\* Mr. Justice Talfourd died in Court, March 13th, 1854.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

“ We have thus concluded a tale which has been the means of renewing, for some twelve months, our association with a locality of which we shall never think without feelings of pleasure and gratitude. If our contributing this little romance . . . has been in however slight a degree an acceptable tribute to any kind friends there, in whose memories we may still live, we are more proud of that result than of the most choice success we may have been fortunate to have obtained elsewhere.”

Again in 1863 we find him eagerly seizing upon the opportunity of flattering his old friends by raising a pæan in *Punch* in praise of Sergeant Roberts of Wem, who had won the Queen's Prize at Wimbledon, beginning “ Shout jolly Shropshire,” and concluding :—

“ Bid thy swift waters break into a gallop,  
Thy salmon leap joyfully up at the flies,  
For prouder than ever henceforth is Proud Salop  
Now Roberts of Shropshire has won the Queen's Prize.”

And again when we come to the events of 1865 we shall find him lecturing at Oswestry before a crowded audience, and by his efforts clearing off the debt on the local Literary Institute.

Of actual events during his time at Oswestry there is but scant record, but that he was pressed into the public service of the community is proved by the fact that he acted as librarian to the Old Chapel Sunday School, of which Mr. Sabine was superintendent.

Of his reading less than a little is known. Indeed, aptly enough, considering the part he was destined to play in the world, the only volume that he certainly

## THE THEATRE

studied at this time was the anonymous "Jokeby," then attributed to James and Horace Smith, but about the authorship of which doubts have since been raised.

Of his recreations we catch but a glimpse. Amongst these whilst under his uncle's roof was probably *not* the theatre, for forty years later he writes in his diary :—

"Reading book Macmillan sent. Life of Young, the actor, by his son. Pleasant book. I am not quite sure as to whether I did not *see* Young for a moment at Oswestry. I know that he came there to act, and that 'The Scape-Goat' was put up, on the anniversary of some 'day of national deliverance' (probably Nov. 5th), and the title of the farce hurt my dear uncle, C. S.'s, religious feelings, and he issued a counter-placard of protest. It was at this time, if any, that I saw a big man, wrapped up, leave a carriage, and I believe I saw Young, but it was for a moment only. F. Fladgate's imitation of him brings him vividly to my mind."

This must have been one of the last appearances of Charles Mayne Young, the great comedian, for, though he survived to the year 1856, he retired from the stage in 1832.

By and bye Shirley had more than enough of theatre-going, but it was probably after the Oswestry time that he had the first glimpse of surroundings in which he was destined to play so prominent a part. More than thirty years later he wrote :—

"I see that Mrs. R. Honner, actress, is about to take a farewell benefit. This reminds me of very old times. The first play I ever saw was at Sadlers Wells, when she,

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

then Miss Macarthy, was a sort of star there.\* It was the 'Red Crow.' I went up from the office in John Street one hot summer day, and not having much money obtained a trifle, from my 'uncle,' but not J. S. B. In the pit. Remember making a solemn note of the incident, and putting it away with the playbill, and wondering whether I should be enticed into habitual theatre-going, a thing I had been taught to fear. Certainly I did go to the play a good deal afterwards, and came to write plays, and now it is hard work to get me into a theatre. I believe that I used to see Mrs. Honner afterwards at the Surrey—an energetic little melodramatic."

I do not find that Shirley was at any time much addicted to athletic pursuits. Certainly the writer in *Cassell's Illustrated Paper* for October, 1858, drew somewhat upon his imagination when he stated that "he became an excellent sportsman with a keen relish for country life."

That he could use a gun is apparent from the following entry in his diary for December 11th, 1873, but that he had a keen relish for country life is directly negatived by a hundred indications. He was a town-bird to the tips of his fingers.

"Got an auctioneer's paper from Oswestry, setting forth that Carreg Llwyd, my Uncle Charles's place, is to be offered for sale. Wonder what this means. I recollect the house being begun. I had often shot fieldfares on its site. But I left Oswestry before my uncle moved in."

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\* Miss Macarthy was married at the age of twenty-four to Robert William Honner, the manager of the Surrey Theatre, in 1836.

## SPORT

And that his early sporting proclivities were not contrary to the wishes of his uncle is proved by a quaint piece of evidence which came to light fourteen years after his death. For the following note I am indebted to Mr. Parry Jones :—

“ In 1888 the following, in the handwriting of Shirley Brooks, was found enclosed in the heel plate of a gun sent to a gunmaker to be stocked : ‘ Latronibus Admonitio. This paper is enclosed in a hole bored in the stock of a gun the property of me the undersigned. The gun was given to me in the winter of the year 1830 by Mr. Charles Sabine, of Oswestry, Shropshire, Solicitor. I am a clerk to him and to Mr. Thos. Menlove, his partner, both of whom can identify this gun as can the persons whose names are written on the back. As witness my hand this 15th August, 1831.

“ ‘ CHARLES WM. BROOKS.’ ”

Here follow six names all connected with Oswestry, together with the quatrain beloved of bibliophiles adapted to his purposes :—

“ Steal not this gun for fear of shame  
For here you see its owner’s name,  
And when you die old Nick will say  
‘ Where is that gun you stole away ? ’ \*

“ CHARLES WM. BROOKS.”

One result of Shirley’s sojourn in Oswestry is to be found in the later pages of *Punch*. The Fleet Street hunchback had allowed the habit to grow upon him of sneering at all things Welsh, the Eisteddfod included. But as Shirley’s influence “ behind the throne ”

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\* Accompanying this was the well-known Latin version.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

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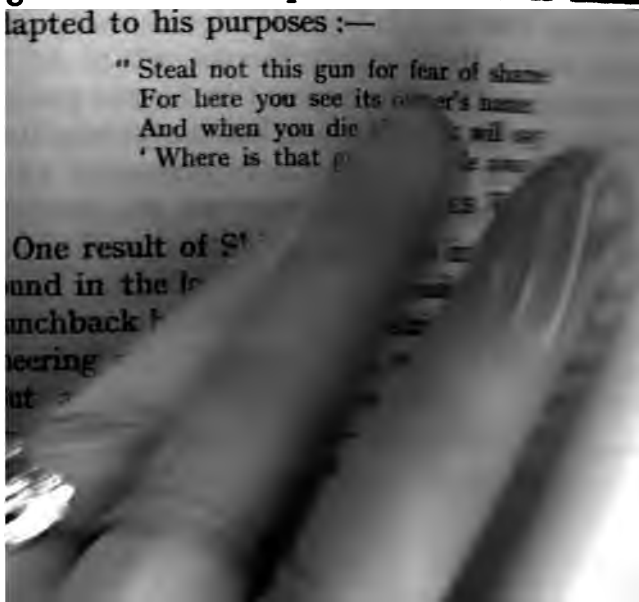
## SPORT

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“ In 1888 the following, in the handwriting of Sirley Brooks, was found enclosed in the heel plate of a gun sent to a gunmaker to be stocked : ‘ Latronibus imonitio. This paper is enclosed in a hole bored in the stock of a gun the property of me the undersigned. The gun was given to me in the winter of the year 1830 by Mr. Charles Sabine, of Oswestry, Shropshire solicitor. I am a clerk to him and to Mr. Thos. Enlove, his partner, both of whom can identify the gun as can the persons whose names are written on the stock. As witness my hand this 15th August, 1888.

“ ‘ CHARLES WM. BROOKS

Here follow six names all connected with ~~Quarry~~ together with the quatrain beloved of ~~himself~~ adapted to his purposes :—



s  
ag  
at  
field



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

became stronger, things took a turn. Elsewhere he had written "I cannot but think that too much has been inconsiderately said against the Welsh language, Welsh literature, and the Welsh habit of mind," and now he wrote an address to Wales declaring that :—

*"Punch*, incarnate justice,  
Intends henceforth to lick  
All who shall scorn or sneer at you,  
You jolly little brick ;"

and henceforward "the little scoundrel of Fleet Street" very well kept his promise.

That, however, is looking a long way forward, for *Punch* had not yet been even dreamed of, and his future editor was struggling to master the intricacies of writs, summonses, subpœnas, pleas, demurrers, rebutters, rejoinders, surrebutters, and surrejoinders, and all the other dreadful things that the archaic body of the law was then heir to.

In the year 1833 he left Oswestry for the office of a London cousin, Mr. Sheffield Brooks, where he is said to have worked to such purpose that he was placed amongst the first four in the earliest batch of candidates to be examined at the Hall of the Incorporated Law Society, which had but lately received its charter. The date of this was 1838, but there is no record of his ever having been actually admitted as a solicitor. That he did what he did mainly off his own bat appears from an entry in his diary for Feb. 19th, 1871, where he writes: "I was never directed at all, and yet, somehow, I managed to grope and flounder well, and was high up in the examination." Though, that he had

## LAW STUDIES

*some* coaching is clear from another entry on March 4th, 1873 :—

“Saw, I think in yesterday’s *Times*, death of Wm. Palmer Parker, the conveyancer, aged 80. This was the adviser of J. S. Brooks & Cooper’s house. I was in constant intercourse with him, and indeed read a short time in his chambers before going up for my examination as a solicitor. I liked him. He stuttered, and was about the ugliest man I knew. I think he was some sort of Quaker, yet he one day showed me the picture of a very pretty girl, and asked me how I liked her.”

It is further evident that he took things fairly easily, for, amongst those rare details which have floated up from the past, comes the undeniable fact that he and one of his fellow-clerks manufactured a backgammon board at the bottom of one of the office drawers, “so that we could play in peace when we ought to have been drawing conveyances—shutting the drawer when the gubernatorial foot was heard.”

The rest, so far as his legal studies are concerned, is silence. And so we leave him this moment rattling his dice, and the next, to outward appearance at least, engrossed with the interests of Mr. Sheffield Brooks’s clients.

## CHAPTER II

1835-1850—The Beginning of his Literary Life—The *Argus*, *Ainsworth's Magazine*, and the *Illustrated London News*—A Freemason—Cruikshank's Table Book—Friendship with Sala—The *Era*, the *Man in the Moon*—Shirley as "Poet."



MEANWHILE Shirley Brooks was living with his parents in Pleasant Row, Islington, not a very luxurious home apparently, for there he occupied a little bedroom into which he "*descended* by a sort of ladder." But it was for him a very important room, for there he penned what curiously enough he imagined to be the first verses "of his very own" which were to receive the baptism of printer's ink. I say "he imagined," for thereby a curious tale hangs. The verses appeared in the year 1834 in Mrs. Cornwall Baron Wilson's little journal, the *Weekly Belle Assemblée*. They were what Shirley called nearly forty years later "some young-fellow verses, which I thought smart—and they described what the satirized world would do in 1835—and what I should do. I remember the noble and highly superior levity of the last verse :—

## UNCONSCIOUS PLAGIARISM

“ ‘ And I shall sit by with a careless eye,  
All changes to me the same,  
And rattle the dice, or star the ice,  
Or wing, or play my game ;  
And when sleep I need I perchance shall read ;  
Or my quill or my cab may drive—  
And the girl I adore in '34  
I shall worship in '35.' ”

To which he appends a list of notes to the effect that he never had a careless eye, but was always very enthusiastic ; that the second line was untrue, because he was then as always a hot Tory ; that he never rattled the dice then or since except, as we know, to play a little backgammon ; that the prophecy failed as regards starring the ice, for he had never skated since ; that he had never shot a “ bird,” so “ winging ” his game was out of the question ;\* that he never attained such luxury as to drive a cabriolet of his own ; and that up to that time he had never been in love. However, he did not think the verses very much amiss. Besides which, they had some importance as the advance guard of the innumerable columns of verses which were to win him his laurels on many a literary field. But here comes the tragedy of the thing. *He never composed the verses at all.* This he found out just thirty-seven years later. Then, when he was editor of *Punch*, the fact burst upon him like a thunder-clap. He had taken up to bed an old copy of the *Mirror*, published years before the *Weekly Belle Assemblée* had been dreamed of, and there, to his dismay, he discovered the verses which he had published

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\* Apparently he remembered that field-fares were not “ game.”

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

over his own name and had always believed to be the product of his own originality, printed and published with some slight variation over a name which was not his! "I must," he wrote, "have read them, and the resolve to surpass them must have come, and been acted on, and then I totally dismissed the original from my mind, and would, until last week, have *sworn* that I had never seen them. I note this nonsense, because it shows how honestly a man may be deceived by his own memory, or want of memory." That he was perfectly innocent in the matter is obvious. Whether he would have been able to prove his innocence in a court of law may be doubted.

It was about this time that *Fraser's Magazine* first fell into his hands and, more especially by its "Gallery of Illustrious Literary Characters," excited his ambition to become a recruit in the army of the Mighty Pen. Referring in after life to William Maginn's "biographico-critical" descriptions attached to Maclise's portraits, there was, as he said, "good smart abuse in some of the Maginnery," but that made it all the more piquant, for here were all the literary giants of the day getting their whippings in public at the hands of the irascible Doctor just like any pack of schoolboys, and taking their whippings lying down.

Curiously enough, the only other literary fact that floats up from these days was remotely connected, though he probably knew nothing about it, with this

"Randy, brandy, bandy, no Dandy,  
Rollicking jig of an Irishman."

Maginn had been asked to write Byron's "Life,"

## THE CORONATION

but, though by no means a squeamish person, had steadfastly refused, shrinking aghast from what Bates called its "hideous apocalypse." And Shirley, reading in 1873 the Biography which Maginn had not written, recalled how he had heard Daniel Wilson preach against the book in Islington Church, adding in his diary, "Well, the story of the Italian life is not exactly tea-table reading." As indeed it is not.

Of literary landmarks there are none other at this period, although he was probably then as in later life an omnivorous reader. Indeed, of landmarks of any sort these years are peculiarly bare, but one date, June 28th, 1838, stood out in memory for the rest of his life, notable for two things. Firstly, that Queen Victoria was crowned. Secondly, that on that day "Mr. Pepys" (as he liked to call himself in his diaries) "left off shaving his whiskers."

"Well remember the day," he writes, "and how I vainly had tried (knowing nobody) to get a ticket for the Abbey, and how, by virtue of a shilling I *did* get in, close behind the John St. party, who had tickets from Lord Glenelg, and I saw the Queen come into the nave, crowned and sceptred, also saw Soult's silver-mounted carriage. Also left off shaving my cheeks that day, which is, therefore, on all accounts, memorable in the history of the universe."

From which we gather that at the age of twenty-three he was becoming interested in his personal appearance, that up to 1838 he had been clean shaven, and that henceforward for some years he presented a pair of "mutton-chops" to an admiring world.

Touching his appearance, Edmund Yates, who knew

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

him as a young man, says that he was singularly handsome and thoroughly English-looking, with well-cut features, fresh complexion and bright eyes. This is corroborated by Sala, who knew him as early as 1832 and says he was "eminently handsome with the clearest of complexions and a lustrous, speaking eye." And Mrs. Panton (Miss "Sissie" Frith), who knew him in later years, tells me that he had beautiful hands and feet, of which he was very proud, and that he always dressed well. As to the colour of his eyes there is the usual discrepancy of evidence, one lady asserting that he had "clear blue eyes," another being equally sure that they were "bright brown."

These things are just worth recording, but we cannot yet get on terms of intimacy with the man. Later on we shall shake him by the hand and talk with him face to face.

Nor do we know how he managed to emancipate himself from the profession for which he had no love. Probably by gradual degrees. The only certain thing is that it was not long before he tried the experiment of living by his pen. Yates, who knew, says that "as soon as he could swim without the corks of law he let them float away and managed to keep his head up, not, however, without more struggle than would be pleasant to, or even good for, everybody. But the world comes to everyone who will wait—and work; and it came to him." It was just "the prosy tale of sheer industry gradually acquiring lucrative employment." And the one thing that made him most sure of ultimate success was the business conscience which

## LITERARY CHARACTERISTICS

he brought to his work. He always said he was a workman, and as a workman bound to be punctual with his "copy." There was no prating about inspiration and no waiting for it. If the Muse was lazy, the jade must be whipped into activity, and whipped she accordingly was.

Nor was he one of those who allowed his Pegasus to grow weak for lack of feeding. As Blanchard Jerrold well said of him, in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, after his death :—

"In him we boasted in England a thorough man of letters ; an artist who dwelt incessantly in art ; a literary man for ever steeped in books—thinking books and talking books. All his outward expression took literary form. I feel certain that when he had once put the law aside for letters (a transaction of his early youth), he never thought for a day of getting away from his bookshelves. He was a literary man of the old, gay, French type, and appeared to be quite unconscious that there were paths in life less steep to climb than his. There was a serene content in him, which stood by him through all the fortunes of his career. He would parry a disappointment with an apt quotation, and close a transaction with a *mot*. He had a bright memory and an alert intellect ; so that his wit and humour were perpetually fed and enriched from the ample stores of his reading. He was no recluse, for ever setting his heel towards the faces of men ; but a joyous, sociable dweller in the midst of his kind. Yet he seemed to be always just clear of his study. He had always something fresh-dug from his shelves, that he made to sparkle on the topic of the hour. A happy illustration of a homely incident delighted him. You could not get him out of literature, in



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

short ; and in this quality of thoroughness he resplended, I repeat, an old French type of *savant* that is unfortunately passing away. . . . Shirley Brooks threw the grace and learning of his art about for the very love of it. It belted him, as the atmosphere belts and encloses the earth."

In a word, he was thorough. Further, he was enthusiast and ambitious. He saw that the Master of Letters wielded the most powerful of weapons, that the point of the pen goes deeper than the point of the sharpest sword, and he determined to be ready when his wheel

" Kommt der Augenblick im Leben,  
Der Wahrhaft wichtig ist und gross."

From one of those tantalising notes, by which a biographer is often faced, it would appear that Brooks's career as a literary man began seriously in the year 1843, for just thirty years later he writes : " Made up from diaries my literary history—*i.e.*, in what year I was engaged on what work from 1843 to 1873. Those notes are lost, together with so much else, that we must I suppose be thankful even for such a small mercy as the date which he looked back upon as his professional starting point.

He had written sporadically before, but he was not in his twenty-ninth year before he definitely adopted the profession of letters.

Although I have seen it stated, and it is probably true, that his first articles were written for the *Argyll*, the earliest of his work that I have been able to identify is to be found in *Ainsworth's Magazine* for 1842,

## "AINSWORTH'S MAGAZINE"

first year of the short-lived collaboration between Ainsworth and George Cruikshank, which was the outcome of the artist's quarrel with Richard Bentley. In that year he is represented by half-a-dozen contributions, all signed "Charles W. Brooks," for he had not yet assumed the name of "Shirley." In the first of these contributions, entitled "The Masque 'off' Comus," he makes irreverent use of Milton's great poem, professing to reprint from the *Morning Post* of June 22nd, 1634, "the Great Abduction Case," in which the Right Hon. the Earl of Comus and the Lady Alice Egerton are the protagonists. It is just the sort of cheap funniment with which the literary aspirant manages to get past the editorial chair, either by favour or when some one of inexperience is on the seat of judgment.

This was followed by "An Evening with Nell Gwynne," quite a readable enough episode in the life of that fascinatingly wicked young person, describing how she managed to "get even" with the rakish Duke of Buckingham. The most interesting thing about it to me is the use he makes of the word "impossible" as equivalent to "utterly unsuitable" in the sentence "The damsel . . . arrived in London in an impossible hat." Murray, I see, gives Carlyle in 1858 as his authority, sixteen years later. It would be interesting to know whether it owes its parentage to Charles W. Brooks.

Next comes "The Lounge in the Œil de Bœuf," a lively enough conversation amongst the hangers-on of Louis XIV's court, in which the author adopts the

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

now exploded notion that the French peasantry of that time were downtrodden and miserable as were their neighbours in Germany, a view which Thackeray also takes in the "Four Georges," prompted thereto doubtless by Voltaire's powerful defence of the serfs in the Jura. Which only goes to show what was certain to be the case, that the young writer was cribbing and converting to his own use facts or no-facts which he gleaned from such books as fell in his way or from deliberate study at that emporium of stale thought, the Reading Room of the British Museum.

After this came in quick succession "The Shrift on the Raft," a tale fashioned on the model which was perfected by Edgar Allan Poe; "The Walls of Fama-gusta" (Vol. II, p. 264); "The Guerillas of Leon" (Vol. II, p. 445); "State and Prospects of the Legitimate Drama in Japan" (Vol. III, p. 51); "What Became of the Executioner" (Vol. III, p. 256); and "Cousin Emily," a story in two parts (Vol. III, p. 258). They are only mentioned for the guidance of the curious, and not for any remarkable promise.

Their importance lies in the fact that through them he was brought into contact with such men as Harrison Ainsworth, Blanchard Jerrold and their friends, who were not long in discovering that in addition to wielding a promising pen he possessed social qualities and a ready wit which made him an acceptable acquisition to their literary circles.

Beginning as a free-lance, he soon commended himself

## “ ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS ”

to the far-sighted caterers for a reading public, which was now clamouring for entertainment.

Those were times of great activity and enterprise in the periodical world. Herbert Ingram, who had removed from Nottingham to London to advertise a pill, remained to found the *Illustrated London News* in 1842. *Bentley's Miscellany* had started on its remarkably successful career but a few years before, and was looking out for likely young men. *The Era*, the *Man in the Moon*, the *Morning Chronicle* were all on the alert for recruits, and one and all discovered qualities in Shirley Brooks which answered to their varied requirements. He was prepared to do anything and go anywhere. He had a ready pen, a gigantic memory, a well-equipped brain. Above all, he was business-like and punctual. He could be depended upon.

What were the exact dates at which he first began to contribute to each of these publications cannot be ascertained and is not of much moment. The important thing is that they all had their share, during the eight years from 1843 to 1851, in preparing him for what was to be the work of his life. For the *Illustrated London News* he did everything by turn and everything well, as was proved by the fact that he continued in its employ for more than a quarter-of-a-century. Weekly articles on the politics of the day; leading articles too numerous to mention, almost too many to count; long series of chatty paragraphs, literary and social, entitled “By the Way” and “Nothing in the Papers”; verses “written up” to illustrations; stories and occasional pieces of all sorts,

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

poured forth in apparently limitless quantities from his untiring pen.\*

So it was with the *Era*, and so it was with the *Morning Chronicle*, of which more will be said in its place.

Beginning, as every writer for the Press must begin, by knocking at the doors of editors, he soon had most of the editors of the day knocking at his.

Of course, he had his ups and downs. He knew drudgery and disappointment. But he had a stout heart, good spirits, a strong digestion, at least in these early days, and full confidence that the world was his oyster which he with pen would open.

By 1844 we find him free of the parental roof and living in bachelor chambers at No. 4 Frith Street, Soho. This I learn from the following note kindly sent by Mr. Sidney Jennings :—

“ It may be of interest to many Freemasons to know that ‘ Charles William Shirley Brooks, of 4 Frith Street, Soho, Esquire, proposed by Bro. J. Strutt, P.M., and seconded by Bro. Fred Montague, Secy., was balloted for, and duly elected and initiated as a member of

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\* He certainly contributed to the *Illustrated London News* as early as 1852, for in 1871 a lady enquired in *Notes and Queries* where she could find certain verses on “ St. Pancras’s Bell.” Shirley, a constant contributor of answers, remembered that he was their author, that they were published in the *Illustrated London News*, and that they were “ writ in those dull chambers in Pall Mall, just before my tide turned.” They appeared on Jan. 17th, 1852, but had been written as long before as 1849. And he adds: “ E. L. (his wife) is good enough to call them clever. I know their author thought them so when he was making them.”

## “ SHIRLEY ”

St. Thomas's Lodge, No. 166 (now No. 142) at an emergency meeting held at the Freemason's Tavern, June 25th, 1844.' Bro. Brooks appears to have been a regular subscriber, and attended to his Masonic duties for some years, and after serving in the several offices became Master of the Lodge, Jan. 8th, 1848. His last recorded attendance appears to have been March 1st, 1851, although the P.M.'s Jewel voted him subsequently was received and acknowledged on his behalf 'by Bro. William Brooks for his absent brother.'”

The following year Shirley proposed his brother William, architect, of Percy Street, who was duly elected, and, in 1847, appointed Secretary of the Lodge.

The above note has, besides its general drift, an incidental importance which should not be overlooked, for here for the first time we find Brooks assuming the “ front ” name of “ Shirley.”

The writer in the “ Dictionary of National Biography ” is mistaken when he says that his Christian names were “ Charles William Shirley,” for it is an undoubted fact that he was baptized plain “ Charles William.” Exactly at what period he first assumed the third name I cannot discover. Indeed, there is some reason to suppose that this pen-name was not adopted *per saltum*, but that first came “ Rivers,” a play upon “ Brooks,” that then came “ Rivers-Brooks,” and finally “ Shirley.” If this is so, then I venture to suggest what may have led up to it. The reasoning is, I am aware, not conclusive, but I give it for what it is worth.

Brooks, as we know, was a voracious reader, particularly of early plays. For more than 150 years the

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

reputation of the Elizabethan dramatist, James Shirley, had suffered eclipse. Lately interest had been revived, and in 1833 Alexander Dyce had brought out a new edition of his plays. This revival of interest could hardly have escaped Brooks's attention. Now, James Shirley had for some reason or other adopted the pen-name, Rivers. What more natural than that this should have suggested to Brooks, casting about for a better pen-name than the mere punning one of Rivers, one which had some literary flavour, and would also mark his traditionary descent from Laurence Shirley, Earl Ferrers ?

That he loathed his name of "Charles" is certain, for Mrs. Panton well remembers in later days that, when Yates wanted to annoy his friend, he would address him as "Charles," just as Shirley himself when he wished to annoy Yates would address him as "Hodgson," Yates's second name.

Anyhow, there were people who envied him the successful assumption. There was, for example, the author-artist, Blackburn, who said one day to Sir Francis Burnand :—

"What a good *name* is Shirley Brooks's. A fortune. A man with such a name has only to write it up, and go to bed, and people would crowd in to put gold and silver into his hand."

And John Cordy Jeaffreson wrote in his "Book of Recollections" with ill-concealed envy of a far abler and more successful man than himself :—

"Authors are apt to be fanciful about their names.  
. . . Charles Shirley Brooks, whilom editor of *Punch*,

## NOMS-DE-PLUME

called himself Shirley, not because it was his name by baptismal rite, but because he wished to hear himself called Shirley. Had he foreseen that the satiric humour of the literary coteries would convert 'Shirley' into 'Shallow' as a more appropriate name for a gentleman who was the reverse of profound, he would perhaps have remained plain Charles Brooks."

"Shallow Brooks" is certainly rather funny, but it misses its point, seeing that Shirley did not pose as profound.

Anyhow, "Shirley" he assumed, and as Shirley he will always be known.

In *Punch*, as we shall see, much of his work appeared over the signature "Epicurus Rotundus," varied on one occasion to "Epicurius Arthriticus," and in the *Musical World* over that of "Zamiel's Owl"; whilst in *Notes and Queries* and other periodicals to which he occasionally contributed he would assume any pen-name that occurred to him at the moment of writing. Thus "K.T.R.P." would stand for "Kent Terrace, Regent's Park," where he lived for many years, and the mystification caused by such an unusual concatenation of initials was to him the source of a very lively satisfaction.

The same year which saw Shirley initiated as a Freemason also saw the termination of the partnership between Ainsworth and George Cruikshank, and found "the inimitable George" ever ready with a fresh idea, conceiving the *Table Book*, a monthly magazine destined to a brief but glorious career. Shirley at once became a contributor.



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

Gilbert à Beckett was the literary editor, and for the first time the future *Punch* editor found himself employed alongside the young *Punch* giants, Mark Lemon, "Michael Angelo Titmarsh," and Horace Mayhew, with whom he was later on to be so closely connected. But there was much to happen before he stormed and took the position which he afterwards held against all comers.

Nor were his chances improved by the intimacy which now sprang up between him and George Augustus Sala, an intimacy which lasted, though not without interruption, through the many vicissitudes of that "turgid" writer's somewhat erratic career, and was only terminated by death.

It is well known that the "graceless young whelp," as Mark Lemon called Sala, was by no means a *persona grata* to the *Punch* people, who never forgave the cleverly vindictive "Word with *Punch*" until Sir Francis Burnand called a truce. Indeed, Shirley himself, during his editorship, carried on the sentiment as a sort of dynastic vendetta, and kept Sala's name on *Punch's* Index Expurgatorius.\* Nevertheless, outside the sacred enclosure, he befriended him in every possible way, although, as I have said, there were times of estrangement, especially when, in Sir Francis Burnand's words :— †

"He and George Augustus Sala had a violent passage of arms in print, Sala having severely criticised 'The

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\* *Vide* Mr. M. H. Spielmann's invaluable "History of *Punch*," *et passim*.

† In the *Pall Mall Magazine*.

## THE "ERA"

Naggletons,' \* and Shirley having sharply replied in *Punch*, where, with the article, appeared a small caricature of Sala. But not long after this they embraced, and were again on friendly terms. All was temporarily forgiven ; but nothing, on either side, was forgotten."

By good fortune, about this time there fell into the hands of Ledger of the *Era* a little play entitled "The Creole," of which something will be said later on, with which Shirley had lately made his first theatrical success. Impressed by its promise of future things, Ledger undertook its publication in book form, thus inaugurating another connection which lasted almost to the end of Shirley's life. Many times he sought to sever it, but Ledger would not be denied, and from the year 1847 to the year 1871 his work continued, almost without intermission, to appear in the *Era's* pages. This was important enough, but the year was big with greater issues.

*Punch* had not reached his seventh year of existence without exciting the rivalry of those clever men for whom no room could be found in what was then one of the closest of boroughs. Of these one of the bitterest was Albert Smith, who, either because he could not agree with Mark Lemon, or because he could not withstand the open hostility of Jerrold, had long since severed his connection with his old colleagues. Actuated by the bitterest motives, he pitched upon Angus B. Reach to second him in his campaign. And between them these two malcontents started the ablest and

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\* Shirley's *Punch* serial.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

wittiest of *Punch's* rivals, the little quarto monthly, the *Man in the Moon*, the first number of which appeared on Jan. 1st, 1847.

Between Reach and Shirley Brooks there existed the closest friendship, and it was probably through Reach's influence that Shirley was asked to join the staff, a good turn which Shirley found opportunity of repaying with interest by and by.

It may here be said that to do Shirley a good turn was one of the best investments a man could make. Indeed, it was by no means a bad investment to do him an ill one. He never forgot the first, but he soon forgave the last, and nothing was too troublesome if a friend—or enemy—could be helped. It was the same in small things as in great. Who'll back a bill? Shirley. Who'll act as secretary to a testimonial? Shirley. Who'll propose or second me for the "Garrick"? Shirley. I want a box for the theatre. Ask Shirley. A subscription. Oh, you can put down Shirley without asking. He's certain to give. It had its drawbacks, of course, for people sponged on him to an unconscionable extent, but it was a characteristic which must be borne in mind.

It was the *Man in the Moon* which gave Shirley his first real opportunity of proving the capacity which he possessed for turning out witty and satirical work at a moment's notice.

From the first the little paper set itself to do what Cruikshank threatened on a well-known occasion—to go down to the *Punch* office "and knock the old rascal's wooden head about."

## “ MAN IN THE MOON ”

It published the sketch of a man speechless with amazement entitled “ Portrait of a Gentleman Finding a Joke in *Punch*.” It offered five hundred pounds reward and a free pardon to one of the *Punch* artists if he would appear before the *Man in the Moon* and satisfactorily explain the meaning of his cut entitled “ Horrible Tragedy in Domestic Life.” \*

Again, it brought “ A Serious Charge ” against its rival of lifting jokes bodily from its own pages, concluding with the words :—

“ Why, *Punch*—you who are always the first to cry out about picking and stealing—what are you about ? For goodness’ sake, turn over a new leaf or we shall have you so reduced in circumstances as to be found haunting our offices, begging bits of superfluous manuscript and crying ‘ Any Jo’, Jo’ ; any old Jo’ ? ’ ”

To which was appended a drawing of *Punch* as a peripatetic old Jew merchant.

But it was left to Shirley Brooks to give the shrewdest blows of all in his rough but brilliant verses entitled “ Our Flight with *Punch*.” And when later Mark Lemon discovered their authorship, he said, “ That young man is formidable. He must be sought as an ally.” They are too many to quote at length, but their quality may be gathered from the following :—

“ Up ! Up ! thou dreary Hunchback ! Ere her diamond stud, the  
Sun  
Stick in Aurora’s habit-shirt, there’s business must be done.

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\* Here, as a matter of fact, the *Man in the Moon* overshot his mark, for Thackeray was the artist of the unsigned “ cut ” in

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

*Moon* were James Hannay, Charles Kenney, Sala, Hine, Henning, and the French caricaturist "Cham," who, together with Albert Smith and Angus Reach, the joint editors, showed a formidable front to their arch-enemy. Nor was the fact that Herbert Ingram was proprietor of the venture calculated to make the attack less bitter, for were not "Parr's Life Pills" one of *Punch's* favourite butts, and was not the *Illustrated London News* in its early days one gigantic organisation for their advertisement? Of course *Punch* retaliated, and Mr. Spielmann tells how it was one of Shirley's attacks that drew from Leech his picture of two little snobs in a low coffee-house:—

"*Punch* is very dummy and slow this week, I think," says the first disreputable-looking "fast man."

"So do I," replies the other. "It's their own fault, too, for I sent 'em some dem'd funny articles, which the humbugs sent me back."

"That's just the way they served me," responds his friend, "the great fools!"

And on the whole I think *Punch* had the best of the encounter. His champions were, taking them all round, abler men than his opponents, and he only bided his time to enlist under his banner the best of those who were now sowing their wild oats. Shirley himself was but a mercenary. He had no real quarrel with the common rival, and the *Punch* men knew this. Even Jerrold, whom he had particularly attacked, eventually plumped for his admission to the Table, and, when the time came, took an early opportunity of referring to him as "the most rising journalist of the day." He

## “ MAN IN THE MOON ”

knew, as did everyone else, that the righteous indignation of these young bloods was but the stage-thunder of an elaborate make-believe, and that they barked loud rather to attract attention to themselves than with any great expectation of warning off evil-doers. And in this they were not unlike a good many gentlemen of the Press in these days.

So Shirley was left to cut his literary wisdom-teeth for a few more years, after which he became, as we shall see, by slow but sure degrees, Mark Lemon's right-hand man, to whom the great editor could turn for anything, on any subject, at any moment. Those were the days of all-round men. Now things have changed and people specialise in the departments of humour as they do in all other departments of work.

But this is anticipating, and it must not be supposed that the *Man in the Moon* confined his attentions to his powerful and victorious rival. A stroll through his pages will show us, amongst other things, how history repeats itself.

Take, for example, the article headed “ Stratford-on-Avon ” in the tenth number, which should be of special interest to Miss Corelli and Mr. Sidney Lee, for there we have :—

“ Woodcuts of ‘ Shakespeare's house as it is at present,’ ‘ Shakespeare's house as it appeared when his father first took it,’ ‘ Ditto as it would have appeared had he lived till now,’ and ‘ Ditto as it may appear, hereafter, when restored by the Camden Society ;’ ”

together with much good fooling and good sense combined.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

Again we might recommend to the present Keeper of the Turner drawings in Trafalgar Square "A Voice from the Vernon Gallery," beginning with the lines :—

"Oh say, what is that thing called light,  
Which I must ne'er enjoy,

\* \* \* \*

"Why should this den of dreary night  
My every charm destroy?"

commenting upon the following paragraph from the *Morning Chronicle* of the period :—

"On entering the sombre hall, a placard points out a dark staircase which leads to the dull abyss, to which the British School of the National Gallery has been consigned. To see the pictures was in most cases a matter of impossibility. It would be impossible for the most ingenious Mar-all to contrive a place less adapted for the exhibition of works of art, than this miserable hole of Trafalgar Square."

But we must not linger over the general aspect of these fascinating little volumes, which may still be picked up by the curious in second-hand bookshops—at a price. We must confine ourselves to Shirley Brooks's part in them.

Here is an example of his purely humorous work in these pages, an example the more interesting seeing that it was soon after somehow "lifted" into the pages of *Punch* itself!

"WHAT ARE THE WILD WAVES SAYING?"

(A Sea-shore Lyric.)

"'What are the wild waves saying?'

Said a maid in a round straw hat,

On the sands of Margate playing:

'Papa, can you tell me that?'

## AS VERSIFIER

Her sire in grim displeasure,  
No sort of an answer made,  
Till she fetched him a slight refresher  
With the flat of her wooden spade.

Then, with a look askance, her  
Enquiry thus he met :  
' You must mind and keep my answer  
From your mother's ear, my pet.  
I know what the waves are saying,  
But if *she* were to know, my lamb,  
To us both she'd soon be weighing  
Toko in lieu of yam.'

The child, with a face of wonder,  
Drew close to her father's knee,  
While, with brow as black as thunder  
This speech imparted he :  
' Like the arrow shot at a target  
Comes this message through the foam—  
' *You're an ass for coming to Margate,*  
And you'd better have stayed at home.'

When his friend Sala wrote that "Shirley Brooks was a born poet," he, of course, wrote nonsense. That he was an ingenious rhymester who had the knack of making wit and wisdom

. . . "Shine  
Through the harsh cadence of a rugged line,"

is the best that can be claimed for him. We may even admit with another of his friends, Edmund Yates, that his verses were better than nine-tenths of what passed for poetry in his day, but that is after all but faint praise. Apart from everything else, surely no one who was a "born poet" could have been guilty of some of the enormities in parody which he



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

perpetrated. Take, for example, Campbell's poem  
"The Last Man," which runs :—

" All earthly shape shall melt in gloom,  
The sun himself must die,  
Before this mortal shall assume  
His immortality," etc., etc.

parodied by Shirley into :—

" Five bottles must at least go round,  
The sixth be nearly dry,  
Before this mortal shall assume  
His inebriety," etc., etc.

That is funny, no doubt, but a thing to be repented of in sackcloth and ashes. No man with the true poetic instinct could have so far demeaned himself without intentional wickedness. And Shirley, often thoughtless and carried away by uproarious spirits was not wicked. Indeed, I believe the conventional statement, that he never published a line which he knew to be indecent or irreligious, to be strictly in accordance with fact.

True, his contemporary reputation as a "poet" was considerable, so much so indeed that, in one notable instance at least, he got credit for a production which was more like poetry than anything he ever wrote himself. But one swallow does not make a summer, more especially if that swallow happens to be a sparrow. Around that particular production something of the dimensions of a controversy has raged. Fortunately I am able to settle the matter conclusively. But of that in its place. On the other hand, Thackeray, on two occasions at least, had fathered upon him sets

## AS VERSIFIER

verses by Shirley Brooks, of which I do not fancy he would have much cared to claim the parentage. The first was "The Elegy to a Porpoise!" wrongly ascribed to Thackeray in the "Life of Frank Buckland." The second was a parody on "Locksley Hall," beginning :—

"Johnson, take another tumbler ; Johnson, light a fresh cigar."

When this was so attributed, Shirley was quick to put in his claim, not I fancy so much to clear Thackeray of an unfounded charge, as to put to his own credit what there was nothing much to be proud about.

And this was a characteristic of Shirley's, not perhaps an uncommon one to be found in able men. He was far prouder of the inconsiderable things that he did than of the considerable. He would give a shilling to a crossing-sweeper and blaze it abroad. He would put a boy to school whom he had never seen and who had no conceivable claim upon him and keep him there for years, and would say nothing about it.

As time went on, the habit—the fatal facility—grew upon Shirley of thinking in rhyme. Ideas presented themselves to him ready-clothed in metrical garments until it became almost as easy for him to write in verse as in prose. To write to a friend a rhyming letter containing an excruciatingly bad rhyme gave him the liveliest satisfaction, far more, I think, than the laborious discovery of one with irreproachable affinity.

Here is a good example of the sort of thing he loved to dash off, the first of a delightful series of letters put

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

at my disposal by the generous kindness of Lieut.-Col. Gaskell :—

S. B. TO PERCIVAL LEIGH.

*" Garrick Club, Sunday.*

" MY DEAR LEIGH,

" Rub a dub dub,  
Three men in this club ;  
One lives in Long Acre,  
One married Miss Baker, (a fact),  
The third has a face like a  
Roasted potater—

that's me.

" I'm up for a few days, and hope to meet you at dinner on Wednesday.

" Ever yours,

" S. B."

It would, of course, be absurd to judge Shirley Brooks's verse by rules applying to the higher forms of literary art. They were but a sublimated form of journalism, and the fact that, during his connection of twenty years with *Punch*, he published over six hundred sets of verses in that journal alone, is enough to excuse them from any very searching criticism. As his son Reginald, in the Introduction to the posthumously published "Wit and Humour," justly said: "There was no time for choosing of epithets, for weighing of phrases, for polishing of lines, there was no time to wait for favourable seasons and conditions; they had to be written from week to week in whatever bodily pain or mental grief their author might chance to be. Many of the epigrams . . . which seem the most highly polished, were written off impromptu; and even of the longer poems—to give an example of the

## LOG-ROLLING

rapidity with which they were produced—"The Rime of the Ancient Alderman" (fifty stanzas of four lines, together with marginal notes to each verse) "was composed in an hour." That is the way journalism has to be done, and that is the way Shirley did it, his proud boast being, during his long connection with the Press, that he had never kept the printer waiting for his copy.

Of actual mention of Shirley Brooks's name in the pages of the *Man in the Moon*, whose influence with the public depended largely on the anonymity of its contributors, we do not of course expect to find much, and yet these young men were not above a little log-rolling when they had the chance. Indeed, as early as Vol. I, page 183, we find a review of one of Shirley's plays, beginning with a delightful affectation of superiority :—

"Since we last went to press, a burletta called 'The Wigwam,' written by one of our collaborateurs, has been produced at the Lyceum Theatre with much success. This result is mere matter of course, because any writer who is qualified to contribute to these pages is, we should humbly imagine, perfectly competent to any other task which could possibly be required of him. It is, therefore, sufficient to say that 'The Wigwam' is received with nightly applause, and that it points a great number of morals of various descriptions ;" and concluding, "Mr. Shirley Brooks is the writer of the piece, which has been very carefully and effectually got up and will have a good run." And certainly he was fortunate in his cast, which included Frank Matthews, the Keeleys, Oxberry, and Miss Arden.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

Again I find the following passage of calculated *naïveté* rather alluring :—

“The Lyceum fills prosperously. We disdain to puff anything, or anybody, more especially anything achieved by anybody who happens to be our friend and collaborateur. It is for that reason, therefore, that *we refrain from saying* that the little drawing-room comedy, by Shirley Brooks, produced since our last number, and called ‘Anything for a Change,’ is one of the neatest and most sparkling little gems which ever glittered in the perfect setting of a Vestris ‘Get Up.’”

Once indeed the staff of the little paper throws aside its anonymity and appears before the curtain. “Shirley,” “Angus,” and “Albert” discuss the contemporary drama in open court, just as on occasion certain eminent dramatic critics in these days condescend to do, for the good of the drama, of course, and not to advertise themselves. A few lines of quotation must suffice :—

“*Angus.* “The Creole” is by far the best drama Shirley has written. The idea is new, the plot is very carefully and ingeniously constructed, the situations are extremely effective and the dialogue is thoroughly vigorous.’

“*Albert.* ‘Anything to add to that, Shirley?’

“*Shirley.* ‘Nothing; Angus’s praise is extravagantly high, and perfectly just.’”

Of course, the opportunity is not lost of having a sly dig at their great rival. Shirley bets a copy of the *Man in the Moon* against a copy of *Punch* that a certain manager does not give a certain actress £100

## BALLOONING

a night. To which Angus drily answers : " You will get no takers, *even at such odds.*"

One other matter and we must close this account of Shirley's connection with *Punch's* antagonist.

In Laman Blanchard's " Life " there is a reference, under date June 7th, 1847, to " the veteran aeronaut, Shirley Brooks." But surely here we find Homer nodding. Shirley was certainly not yet a veteran, for he was but thirty-two. And as certainly he was no aeronaut, for only once did he risk his bones in a balloon. This is pretty clear from a note made by Mr. Silver after one of the *Punch* dinners many years later :—

" ' I once went up in a balloon,' Shirley told us, ' and I wasn't a bit funky, but I frankly didn't like it. London seemed to slip away, and the sensation was unpleasant somehow, though I felt no motion. But the bumping on the ground on coming down was beastly. I believe that some of my lower bones would have certainly been broken had not my rotundity acted as a buffer.' "

The ascent was made from Cremorne in Green's balloon, *The Nassau*. With him were Albert Smith and half-a-dozen other newspaper men, and the event made good copy for the next number of the *Man in the Moon*. The staff was anxious to pay a visit to the real *Man in the Moon*, they wished to present him with a copy of their publication in person, they wished to experience a new sensation, and (incorrigible punsters as they were) were ready for a lark, and thought the skies the best place to find one !

## CHAPTER III

*Morning Chronicle*—"Russians of the South"—As Theatrical Critic—"A Story with a Vengeance"—Angus Reach.



UCH as Shirley Brooks had reason to congratulate himself on his literary successes, so far he was but a free-lance in the army of writers. He was ready for a job here, there, and everywhere, but he was uncertain of his true *métier*. Like the singer who knows he has a powerful organ, but does not know what "register" he should adopt, like the actor who is trying his hand now at tragedy, now at comedy, he must give each its chance, and let time prove in what he is most excellent. Naturally, he tried his luck with the drama, and with no little success.

As it was with his verse-writing so it was with his work done for the stage. He enjoyed the facility with which he could convert the teeming fancies of his brain into current coin of the realm. His imagination and his pen were but the implements with which he was to make a name, carve out a career in the world, do his work—and receive his wages for doing it. They

## “ THE CREOLE ”

were no more than that and he would have been the first to repudiate the name of “ poet,” the first to laugh at anyone who called him even a second Planché.

His play-writing, like his verse-writing, was pot-boiling, done with might and main and with the breezy enjoyment of the man whose heart was in his work. It was just a part of his darrach, pretending to no great literary excellence. It was clever, but it was not art.

“ The Creole,” the publication of which by Ledger resulted in his long connection with the *Era*, is the first of his plays of which I find public mention. But that it had its predecessors is probable. Indeed, as early as 1845, he was admitted to membership of the Dramatic Authors’ Society, a society which, then or later, numbered amongst its members such prominent *Punch* men as Mark Lemon, Douglas Jerrold, Henry Mayhew, Albert Smith, Tom Taylor, (Sir Francis) Burnand, and Gilbert à Beckett.\*

“ The Creole, or Love’s Fetters ; an original drama in three acts,” as its full title ran, was produced at the Lyceum on April 8th, 1847, under the management of the Keeleys. The hero, *Antony Latour*, was finely played by Emery, “ a most excellent actor, never sufficiently appreciated ;” † the heroine, *Virginie Damiron*, by Mary Keeley (Mrs. Albert Smith) ; and the fiery, reckless, kind-hearted *Vivandière* by Mrs. Keeley herself. “ Never,” wrote Douglas Jerrold in his *Weekly Newspaper*, “ never did a piece of the kind

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\* *Vide* “ The à Becketts of *Punch* ” by Mr. Arthur à Beckett.

† *Vide* Yates’s “ Recollections.”



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

play more completely on the first night. The three acts went, not only swiftly, but, with all their variety of involution, smoothly as a ballet," and this notwithstanding that only six rehearsals had been called. The fact was that Mrs. Keeley had given the young dramatist but scant time for his task. On the morning of Tuesday, March the 16th, one scene only had been written, and on the evening of the following Saturday, the completed work, an entirely original drama, or rather melodrama, was in the hands of the management. The piece proved, in the words of the *Athenæum* of the day, "a moderate success." Nevertheless, henceforth Shirley, as a dramatist, was in constant request. "The Creole" has often been revived, and certainly was acted as late as June, 1876, at the St. James's Theatre with Mrs. John Wood as the *Vivandière*. It is to be found with several others of Shirley's productions in Lacy's "Acting Edition of Plays" and Dick's "Standard Plays." Some day, prophesied Blanchard Jerrold in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, a manager will come along who will read them and will find that there is very seldom any dramatic writing produced nowadays of such excellent quality, and will give them another chance. That, I think, is too sanguine a hope, too high an estimate. Anyhow, they were good enough in those days for the Keeleys, Charles Mathews, and Charles Kean, and were important as bringing him into friendly relationship with many remarkable people of the period.

Others of his plays produced by the Keeleys at the

## PLAY-WRITING

Lyceum were "Our New Governess," "Honours and Tricks," and "The Wigwam."

On June 7th, 1848, "Anything for a Change" made its bow, with Charles Mathews in the part of *Swoppington*, and a Miss "Polly" Marshall, who, according to Yates, acted "*Eliza*, a servant," inimitably. It was a one-act *petite comédie*, and was important as introducing Shirley to Madame Vestris, into whose and Mathews's hands the Lyceum management had now passed.

This was followed at the same theatre by the farce "Shave you Directly," and, at the Olympic, by "The Magician," both produced for the first time in 1849, and both with considerable success.

Then came in 1850 "The Daughter of the Stars," at the New Strand Theatre, with *Miriam*, the gipsy girl, "most strikingly personated by Mrs. Stirling," and William Farren as the *Hon. Antony Hawkstone*. According to the *Athenæum*, which had up till now rather decried the author, it was a drama "of remarkable merit, approaching in wit to the brilliancy of Congreve." At the same time the Keeleys were producing his new one-act farce, "The Guardian Angel," at the Haymarket.

Then came in 1851, the year of the Great Exhibition, "The Exposition" in verse, produced at the Strand on April 28th, and described as "a Scandinavian Sketch, containing as much irrelevant matter as possible in one act"; and then "The Lowther Arcade," about which I learn nothing save that it was a "lively farce."

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

These were not the last of his dramatic efforts, as we shall see as we proceed, but we must now go back a year or two and pick up the threads of his newspaper work.

Shirley had been but a year on the staff of the *Man in the Moon*, when another editor, this time one of the greatest editors that England has ever produced, found him out.

In 1865 he wrote in his diary :—

“ We heard this morning that Cobden died yesterday. He is a loss. My recollection of him is connected with my best step in life, for Cook, to see whether I was fit for the office of summary-writer, sent me to Aylesbury to report Cobden and a meeting, which I did successfully, and gained the place which gained me much beside.”

His new employer was John Douglas Cook, the editor of the short-lived but brilliant *Morning Chronicle*, and afterwards of the *Saturday Review*. Elsewhere I have written of this remarkable man, whose irascible temper, flamboyant language, and commanding presence made him the terror of his subordinates. Possessing no literary ability, he proved himself a heaven-born editor, discovering apparently by intuition the men or women who could best serve his purposes, and casting them aside when their work was done with as little compunction as though they were worn-out pen nibs. In 1848 the *Chronicle* had been bought by the Peelite party, and Cook installed in the editorial chair. Shirley was looking about for work, and Cook was scouring the town for likely lieutenants, and

## “ MORNING CHRONICLE ”

when two persons are looking the one for the other they generally meet.

In the first years of his new employment Shirley was just the ordinary newspaper hack, doing anything and going anywhere he was told. Then came the moment when the important office of summary-writer in the House of Commons fell vacant, and he was chosen as fittest for the post. And this notwithstanding the fact that at the time of his appointment he had never heard a debate in his life. “ But,” says Yates, “ he soon learnt his work and continued at it for five sessions, during which time it was impossible for such a man, who really minded and cared for his business, not to pick up a great quantity of miscellaneous as well as political knowledge, of all of which he afterwards availed himself.”

Curiously enough, he never learnt to write in shorthand, although he regretted this disability to his dying day. At that time reporting in the House of Commons was a very different thing from what it is now. Then the staff, confined to a few London papermen, had to work as best they could from the back seat of the Strangers' Gallery. There were no conveniences for writing out “ copy ” in the House, nor for comparing doubtful passages with colleagues who had sharper ears. For these purposes they were driven to seek the shelter of a little tavern, which then stood in Palace Yard. Here an upstairs room was kept sacred to their use, and here such men as Charles Dickens, William Howard Russell, the Pauls, father and son, and a host of lesser lights were wont to foregather.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

It was in these surroundings, and under difficulties which would not be tolerated in these more luxurious days, that Shirley Brooks prepared himself unwittingly for the lively pictures of Parliamentary procedure which are now enshrined in "*Punch's* Essence of Parliament," work continued by him for twenty years "with cleverness, refinement, truth and humour invaluable to the historian and delightful to the general reader."

Speaking of these early Parliamentary experiences to Mr. Silver, he one day said :—

"No, I don't approve of stag-hunting, but I should like to see some Bore-hunting. O, how the Bores have plagued me when I was a reporter! They always quoted poetry, and I always had to mend their misquotations. No, they never got so far as Greek—perhaps they did in Pitt's time. But Parliament is decadent—like prize-fighting and other fine old British institutions. I fancy country M.P.'s like to hear a bit of Latin. It reminds them of their youth. The House dislikes a Bore, and doesn't care for high-falutin'. But when a man's worth hearing, it will always listen to him. I recollect when Brotherton\* first rose to speak; it was upon some Infant Labour question, and the House was inattentive. But he began by saying simply, 'I was a factory boy myself and I know something of the matter.' Then suddenly there fell a dead silence on the benches; and whenever he spoke afterwards he never wanted listeners."

But Shirley's work on the *Morning Chronicle* was not confined to home affairs. In 1850 and 1851 he and

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\* Joseph Brotherton, M.P. for Salford.

## AS DRAMATIC CRITIC

his friend Reach were sent abroad to enquire into the conditions of the agricultural classes. Angus went to France and Shirley through South Russia, Asia Minor, and Egypt. The results of these enquiries appeared in the paper in the form of letters to the editor. So great was the attention that they attracted that their publication in book form was forthwith demanded. Angus Reach's investigations were embodied in that delightful book, "Claret and Olives," and Shirley's in the sixth volume of Longman's *Travellers' Library*, under the title of "The Russians in the South" (1854). It at once attracted the attention of the *Quarterly Review*, which wrote "he is one of the closest observers and one of the liveliest writers of the day." The book may be read even now with pleasure and profit, despite its uninteresting title and appearance.

His foreign adventure over, Shirley returned after six months to London, and once again showed that he could turn his attention to, and excel in, a very different class of newspaper work.

In those days the theatrical critics wielded enormous power, and Shirley for the *Chronicle*, John Oxenford for the *Times*, and David Hastings for the *Herald*, formed, with George Henry Lewes, a tribunal whose verdict the managers awaited with bated breath. And so good a judge as Charles Dickens spoke of Shirley in this connection as "one of the two ablest and keenest . . . among the great army of critical writers."

A practical dramatist himself, he was well equipped for this responsible office, both intellectually and morally, and he was far removed from that class of

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

critics who damn a play by reason of prejudice against its author.

“Who do you say wrote this play?” asked one of these, when “Title Deeds” was under discussion. “Richard Brinsley Peake,” answered another. “What?” said the first, “Dicky Peake! Damned nonsense! He couldn’t write a farce. *I knew his father.*”

And Shirley, whilst roaring with laughter at the *non sequitur*, would heartily condemn the stupidity that it connoted.

But, important to himself and valuable to the public as was Shirley’s work on the *Chronicle*, there was something else intimately connected with it which, from the biographer’s point of view, is of far greater moment. For, if biography is to be of real value, it must show not so much what things a man did as what the man who did these things was like. And here we are enabled to catch something of Shirley’s character—what sort of heart there was in him.

To use a hackneyed but expressive term, he had a genius for friendship, and this was never more markedly shown than in the tender and practical help which he extended to Angus Bethune Reach, his friend and fellow-worker.

Working together, and showing their mettle in the pages of the *Man in the Moon*, fighting side by side in the ranks of the *Morning Chronicle*, to the editor of which Angus had also been his introducer, together they laid siege to *Punch*, and together they eventually, as Mr. Spielmann says, carried the position by assault.

## ANGUS REACH

they were brothers-in-arms and, as such, must succour the other when knocked out of time. And Shirley was good at helping lame dogs over stiles.

In 1852 Reach and he, in addition to their other work, collaborated in a little volume entitled "A Story with a Vengeance," now only valuable to the collector as containing wood-engravings after Charles Dickens. This was the first and, as it proved, the last of their joint-ventures, for soon after Reach showed signs of brain failure.

Then followed for Shirley's friend months of irregular and intermittent work—dreadful months during which hope alternated with despair, now brightening, now waning, now brightening again, until at last the poor man became incapable of further effort. At first things were not bad financially, for the proprietors of the *Chronicle*, mindful of Reach's faithful and brilliant services, continued his salary. Soon, however, this source of income could not be relied upon, for the paper was losing ground, and, after all, as Mr. William Simpson says in his excellent little monograph,\* it was not in the bond to maintain even a good servant beyond a reasonable time." Then it was that Shirley showed the stuff he was made of. He volunteered to do the double work on condition that the clock man's salary was continued. This was agreed to, and the "noble arrangement lasted for about a year, and would have lasted longer had not death come."

Nor was this the limit of his friendship. For years

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\* "Two Famous Correspondents: the Reach's, father and son," *Verdness*, 1905.



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

Reach had contributed a "London Letter" to the *Inverness Courier*. This, too, Shirley took upon his shoulders, so successfully adopting his friend's style, and so carefully keeping the secret of Reach's illness, that for many months the readers of the paper had not the slightest suspicion that any change of authorship had taken place. During all this time Brooks refused any reward, though still struggling for his own maintenance. The cheques were handed over untouched for the benefit of the poor sufferer and his wife. By degrees, of course, the truth about Reach's hopeless illness became public property. Then Shirley's share in the matter could not be hid, and then Reach's friends of the Garrick and Fielding Clubs, Dickens, Thackeray, Ainsworth, Peter Cunningham, Tom Taylor, Mark Lemon, John Oxenford, John Forster, and a host of others combined to insure that his days should be ended in comfort and independence. "Round a worthier companion friends never rallied in the hour of his trouble," wrote Brooks, and surely among these noble-hearted men none was more noble and sincere than Shirley himself.

After Reach's death in 1856, Shirley for a short time acted on his own account as correspondent to the *Inverness Courier*, relinquishing this employment in 1857, and leaving behind him a host of friends. First amongst these was that remarkable man, Robert Carruthers, who occupied the editorial chair for full half-a-century. Between him and Shirley hearty friendship and camaraderie continued without a break until death ended it.

## ANGUS REACH

Only one letter do I find referring to Reach amongst the little of Shirley's early correspondence that has come into my hands, but in this we discover him characteristically doing him a friendly turn :—

SHIRLEY BROOKS TO — SCOTT.

" 12 *New Inn*, Saturday, (1852).

" MY DEAR SCOTT,

" . . . This will be a good opportunity for me to introduce to you our regular Fine Arts cricket,\* Mr. Angus Reach (Highland name, 'ch' as 'k'), who is a ready and picturesque writer, a valued friend of mine, and an excellent fellow, and by him, no doubt, the notice in question, and most others will be done. I interfere *occasionally*, only, *pour cause*, but you will find that he will say what I should say. I shall tell him to ask for you.

" Most truly yours,

" S. B.

" P.S.—I am *so* glad the Duke† is buried. I was near calling yesterday to congratulate you on the fact, but hardly knew whether you could share my glee. You would if you had printed *five* columns about him. That night I did."

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\* S. B. was dreadfully fond of inversions of this kind.

† The Duke of Wellington.

## CHAPTER IV

Appearance—As Conversationalist.



UCH has been said in preceding chapters of influences which work fitting Shirle the high position he destined to occupy the hierarchy of E journalism.

He was taking true and that, as *Conrad*

to *Don John* in "Much Ado about Nothing," "be fair weather he was making for himself." He "framing the season for his own harvest." He faith in, he was preparing for, his destiny, but that destiny was to be he had as yet no guess. I propose to pause for a space in the record of work at the risk of slightly anticipating events, to try give some idea of the characteristics of the work. For I hold that the work by which a man is judged, the work which has been as much a pleasure to him as a task, the work for which he has discovered a real genius, cannot properly be understood by

## APPEARANCE

unless we first gain some understanding of the man who did it.

One who knew him well tells me that he remembers him as "a clear-skinned, rosy-cheeked, fresh-looking gentleman-farmer sort of man," with "thick fair hair, bright blue eyes, very clear, and a ready smile with a slight curl of the upper lip, which gave a look of cynicism when he joked or laughed. His manner was peculiarly courteous to ladies, and to what to him must have been uninteresting people, with whom he had little in common. This was a striking trait, and full as his conversation was of bright and polished satire and witticisms, there was a breezy, hearty surface-geniality about it, which was very characteristic." "Even at the last," wrote Edmund Yates, "when his hair was silvery white and his beard grizzled, he retained his freshness, which, combined with his hearty, genial manner, his appreciation of, and promptitude to enter into, fun, made him look considerably younger than his real age. He was hearty and hospitable, fond of dining at the dinners of rich City companies, where he would make excellent speeches; fond of enjoying the company of a friend at the Garrick Club, or at a corner table in a coffee-room at one of the old hotels in Covent Garden." According to Sala, he was "a very handsome man, prematurely white as to hair and beard, with the clearest of complexions and a lustrous, speaking eye."

Mrs. Jopling Rowe, who of course can only remember him in his later days, speaks of his broad, open forehead, his eyes gleaming with sudden kindly humour, his

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

moustache and beard carelessly trimmed, and his general picturesqueness.

Mrs. Panton writes to me of his dark, full beard, and silver-grey hair, which fell in a shock over his right eye, and which he used to toss back when he spoke or laughed.

Blanchard Jerrold remembered "his fine presence and gallant bearing, his lively talk that assumed considerable knowledge in his listeners . . . his gracious and sympathetic method of approach (which) bespoke the man who had enjoyed . . . the constant companionship of cultivated gentlewomen. Shirley Brooks could pay a compliment in the old, respectful style, and turn the corner of a mistake . . . with a special grace that was all his own."

On one occasion he invited a gentleman and his daughter to dinner, but had omitted to give the number of his house. This being requested, he made an elaborate drawing of the outside of his street door, writing beneath it, "This is the side of my door on which I am least anxious to see you."

"Not demonstrative," continues Jerrold, "nor in any way a gushing or sentimental man, Brooks was hearty. But his heartiness had been polished; and he was to the unceremonious, bluff and fast folk of the present day, somewhat ceremonious and modish. His manner always reminded me of that of a fashionable physician."

"He was," says his old friend Mr. Frith, "a *bon vivant*, but never guilty of the excesses which sometimes disfigure that character. . . . He was open-handed

## AS CONVERSATIONALIST

to a fault. . . . He hated animals, his one bad trait in my eyes. . . . He always used to work in his shirt sleeves and ramp and rage at any noise."

Without being a dandy he gave some thought to his appearance and dress. Mr. C. J. Tait's chief recollection of his distinguished relative is as a youngster seated on his knee "wondering amazingly at his velvet waistcoat." And in one of his later diaries Shirley records, "Matthews, 'Torie' (Miss Matthews), and Jessy called, and Mr. Pepys exhibited himself in his new velvets, which, methought, did much content them."

That is as some of his intimates saw him, and their evidence is sufficiently consistent. From others I gather that he was a brilliant raconteur, far more humorous in his conversation than in his writing. This humorous rôle he assumed with much seriousness. Indeed so much store did he lay upon his reputation as a talker that before a dinner-party he would shut himself up for an hour in his study and prepare for the conversational fray. And well he was rewarded, for he it was who kept the table in a roar, and with his handsome face and charming voice put everyone in a good humour.

That there was one at least of his acquaintances who was at times conscious of a lack of spontaneity in his talk is clear from the following extract from an unpublished manuscript of "Reminiscences," by Henry Sutherland Edwards, kindly lent to me by Mr. George Thomas :—

"Shirley Brooks," he writes, "was a brilliant, clever, and very agreeable man. But both his

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

conversation and his writing would have been more interesting had he taken less pains to render them witty. He had plenty of genuine wit. But when he could think of nothing sparkling or facetious he had recourse to epigrammatic forms and antithetical moulds. There seemed to be some point in what he said, but it was nothing more than one part of a sentence balanced against another. There is a sad example of this on a tombstone in Norwood Cemetery, where Shirley Brooks's friend, Angus Reach, lies buried. The epitaph which could only have been from one hand, runs as follows :

"Distinguished in Periodical Literature,  
Beloved in Private Life,"

two words beginning with a P and an L played off against two other words beginning with a P and an L. And to accomplish this alliterative feat the writer lowered the literary importance of the man he wished to honour."

In other words, Shirley had a reputation as a talker and a writer to keep up, and had to eke out his wit when it ran thin with the tricks and antics known to all who have found themselves in a like position.

Shirley took a lively interest in the small and great doings of the great and small people about him, of whom the world was talking. In the *Punch* days, frequenting the Bedford Hotel, which was kept by Mark Lemon's sister-in-law, Mrs. Warner, he was, with Lemon, Thackeray, and other *Punch* men, one of the few privileged persons who had the *entrée* to the Shakespeare Room, Mrs. Warner's private parlour. And it must be confessed, these great and important personages were not above talking a great deal of

## AS GOSSIP

scandal and showing a great deal of curiosity about their neighbours' affairs, which could all be turned into conversational coin, with proper reservations, outside.

A good story is told of one of the circle, which, though possibly *ben trovato*, is at least suggestive of an inquisitive atmosphere. One of the party writing at the table had a sudden suspicion that another was reading his letter as he wrote. He therefore stopped in the middle of his sentence and continued "Blank is reading this letter upside down as I write, so I don't tell you the rest of the story." And Blank, a young lady, blushed so scarlet that the writer's suspicions were duly justified.

Nor did Shirley disguise his love of gossip. Here are two extracts from his diaries which are delightful in the naïveness of their self-revelation.

There was a report going the rounds about the beautiful Mrs. Rousby, the actress, and a celebrated actor, and he writes :—

"Cab to G[arrick]. Special meeting of P. Simpson, Walter Lacy, Johnny Deane and self round stove in hall to discuss the scandal. Talk of women loving such things—we are deliberate and unimpassioned tale-bearers—none of us care a d— about it, and we talk of nothing else."

And the next day :—

"Wrote T. Taylor, on two or three matters, but *really to allude to the scandal!*"

Very reprehensible, no doubt, but surely easily forgiven for the frankness of the confession.

Of course, there were some people who, from one



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

cause or another, did not love Shirley Brooks. He was too successful a man not to arouse jealousies. There was, for example, a certain would-be-smart person named Cecil Hay, who in 1870 published two volumes dealing with "The Club and the Drawing-Room." Here, in his description of the *habitués* of the Garrick Club, Shirley appears under the guise of "Mr. Cynical Suave." I give the passage for what it is worth, which is little enough, for, from the whole tone of the book, Mr. Hay must have been a most un-clubable person, and just such an one as Shirley or any other clubable man would have heartily and rightly detested :—

"A very different person indeed from Mr. Grizzly is Mr. Cynical Suave, who is lounging at his ease in that very tempting armchair. Like Mr. Grizzly, Mr. Suave is a novelist, and a novelist of a very high order. His books are full of pretty comments, overflow with genuine epigrams, sting with their sarcasm, sparkle with vivacity, and fix irresistibly the most dull and lethargic of readers by the ingenious excellence of their plots. And, a very rare thing to find, Mr. Cynical Suave is in conversation much what his books are in literature. He is exceedingly amusing, very sharp, especially if you expose your flank to him by some heedless remark—apparently the soul of geniality and the quintessence of wit; just the sort of man that every one is certain to like immensely the first time of meeting; to like perhaps with moderation the second time; and cordially to detest the third. It is currently reported that Mr. Cynical Suave is not amenable to any of those sentiments which are generated by the virtue of charity; that he will be your very good friend

## REPARTEE

one moment, and make a very good fool of you behind your back the next ; that he is precisely the one man of all others whom it is dangerous to convert into an enemy, and whom at the same time it is impossible to count upon as an ally."

Of the real flavour of conversation, of verbal and other felicities, it is hard to recover anything worth having after the lapse of decades. The fizz has gone out of the champagne. Laughter has lost its ring. We can but recover the muffled echo.

One of Shirley's repartees has been often told and always told wrong. One day at Mr. Frith's dinner-table one of the guests exclaimed :—

" *Punch!* does anyone read *Punch* ? I know I can't."

" No one would expect that *you* could," flashed back Shirley.

This story has had considerable currency, and I suppose appeals to some humours. Personally, I confess, it seems to me merely unmannerly.

Puns were dreadfully in vogue in those days. One summer evening Thackeray arrived late at the *Punch* dinner. He had given up a lady's dinner for a dinner with Lord John Russell, and the little statesman had left him in the lurch. " So," he said, " I come as a *peas-aller* to Mr. P. to eat my peas in peace."

" But you must mind your Q's as well," said Shirley, " and you must take your cues from me or I shall not excuse you."

Here are others from Mr. Silver's well-stored memory :

One day Shirley brought up for dessert a noble pineapple which had been sent to him from Barbadoes.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

“What a beauty!” exclaimed Thackeray, and then without a moment’s hesitation, “Silver, aren’t you proud, *Pinus silvae filia nobilis?*”

For an instant Mr. Silver hesitated for a reply and Shirley burst in:—

“My dear Thackeray, please remember that poor Silver is yet unwed. How can he recognise her yet—in good society?”

Here is an example of Shirley’s readiness with a striking metaphor. The talk was of mercenary literature.

“Writing a fine poem,” he burst out, “merely to make money by it, is like turning a watermill with the sacred stream of Jordan, or chopping up the Cedars of Lebanon for firewood.”

“My carriage is waiting for Silver,” once cried Du Maurier impatiently, indicating a waiting hansom cab.

“And mine for gold,” said Shirley, “for *I* can’t afford one.”

Here is another example of the readiness and rapidity with which the spark of his wit set fire to a train of thought:

Mr. Silver had told him of a stage-failure.

“When a play is damned,” he said, “the critics all turn up their noses at it with a sniff as if they smelt the sulphur. And, after all, some of our playwrights may be all the better for a little brimstone. It might help to cure them of their *itch* for popularity.”

And here another.

Partridges were rather prematurely on the *ménu* for dinner one First day of September.

## AS ANECDOTIST

“ Ah,” said Shirley, “ considering the perils their parents have survived, I am always inclined to call young partridges “ The children of the missed ! ”

Here is another example from Sutherland Edwards’s manuscript mentioned above :

Angus Reach had been telling a story of a mediæval German baron, quoted, I fancy, from “ Grimm’s Fairy Tales,” who, just above a small courtyard through which lay the entrance to his hall, suspended an immense millstone. He expected a visit of creditors from the neighbouring town and, as soon as they had all assembled in the courtyard, let down the millstone and crushed them.

“ A perfectly legal action,” said Brooks promptly. “ He was well within his rights. He was merely making a *composition* with his creditors.”

From some corner of his memory Shirley was for ever picking out a good story which was new even to such accomplished anecdotists as his co-workers.

There was the stuttering clergyman who generally made his pauses in the wrong places. One day he was pleading for a sailor who was g-going—to sea his wife—d-desired the prayers of the congregation.

He was rarely rough on anyone, but now and then he was betrayed into severity.

A budding young statesman had been advised to read in Shirley’s presence something that Shirley had written on a subject upon which the young gentleman required enlightenment.

“ Brooks,” he said, as the ideas sunk into his brain, “ Brooks, you are *mad*. Brooks, you *are* mad.”

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

“Never mind, my dear fellow,” said Shirley, “it requires brains to go mad. There’s no fear for *you*.”

But he was rarely so unkind as that, and, if he *did* find that his wit had been too sharp, would be quick to turn its point.

As Mr. Spielmann says, “he was as witty as Jerrold without the sting, but, when he chose, he could strike hard, and, as he himself once said, never care a ‘horse’s mamma.’ . . . The faculty (of unexpected spontaneity) is distinctive of some of his best *mots*.”

One day he was looking at Edmund Yates’s bookshelves. Pausing before one of them, he read off:—

“Homer’s Iliad! Homer’s” (pausing on the word), “Well, yes, that *is* the best.”

“On another occasion,” says Mr. Spielmann, “he, with Mr. George Chester (my informant), was on a visit to Mark Lemon at Crawley, and at the breakfast-table a discussion arose between the two men upon noses, their shapes and characteristics. Turning kindly to one of his host’s little daughters, and looking at her delicate little *nez retroussé*, he said, ‘When they were looking about for a nose for you, my dear, they chose the first that turned up’—a joke often since repeated and well nigh worked to death.”

Here is a story sent to me by Mr. Goodman, a nephew of Charles Salaman.

On being introduced to Shirley, that well-known composer said: “I have often seen your face, Mr. Brooks, but I never knew to whom it belonged.”

“Oh,” replied Brooks quickly, “it always belonged to me!”

He was very quick to play upon words.

## GOOD AND BAD JOKES

Mr. Frith tells how the merits of a certain poet were under discussion. Someone objected that his writings were immoral and indecent, and that he was not a poet at all.

"Not a poet at all?" echoed an admirer, "why the man was born a poet! and if ever man proved the truth of the adage, 'poëta nascitur, non fit,' X. is that man."

"So he is," said Brooks, "he is a poet of *nastiness* not *fit* for publication."\*

But Shirley had not merely the capacity for making *good* jokes. When the atmosphere was sufficiently charged with gaiety he could be irresponsibly funny. He had the gift of nonsense. He was not too proud to make himself ridiculous for the delectation of the moment. If a bad riddle came into his head he would out with it, for it was always worth while to laugh:—

"Why am I like a hospital blanket?" he said to Mr. Frith at the end of a stiff climb. "Because I'm on the top of the 'ill.'" And the big man roared, and everyone else roared, and they were all the better for it.

As we have seen, Shirley could pay a very pretty compliment.

Thackeray, usually the soul of punctuality, arrived late one evening at the *Punch* Table, and explained that he had "barked his shin" in stepping from a carriage.

"You'd better see a doctor," said Mark Lemon. "I've heard that the old fellow who used to drive

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\* I have since seen this attributed to someone other than Shirley.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

'The Age,' the Brighton coach you know, barked his shin and died from it."

"Yes," said Shirley, "so *I've* heard, but you see with Thackeray it's different. He doesn't *drive* the Age, he *leads* it."

"Thank you," said Thackeray, "that's very nicely said. I drink to your good health, sir."

Sometimes his jokes, when repeated, lost their flavour, as jokes are apt to do. Here is a pleasing example from the pen of Montagu Williams.\*

"Mr. Keeley was very fond of telling stories of his wife, to whom he was most devotedly attached, and I remember one of them that caused a good deal of amusement as related. Shirley Brooks, it appeared, had gone to live in a little cottage in the country, where he devoted himself, among other things, to the rearing of fowls, ducks and pigs. One day a pig was killed, and he sent a portion of the animal in a parcel to Mrs. Keeley, with these lines: 'His end was peace, so I send you a piece of his end.' Roaring with laughter, the old gentleman would say, alluding to his wife: 'Mother was telling the story the other day to somebody sitting next her at dinner, and she remarked, "So clever of Shirley, you know; when he sent us the parcel he wrote on a piece of paper inside, 'His end was peace, so I send you a bit of the pig.'"

I have said that Shirley was a great reader and possessed a remarkable memory. As a test of his power, Mrs. Jopling Rowe tells me he would read

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\* *Vide* "Leaves of a Life."

## MISQUOTATIONS

a page of printed matter backwards and then immediately repeat it forwards !

At capping verses, a game much in vogue in his day, only Macaulay could have rivalled him. The pick of English poetry from Chaucer to Tennyson was at his tongue's tip.

But I doubt whether even Macaulay would have approached him in his powers of deliberate misquotation.

A few examples have happily escaped oblivion.

When Mr. Fall, the photographer, first settled in Baker Street, he asked Shirley, whose portrait he had taken gratis, for a testimonial. Shirley at once replied :—

“ Except that I *sat* to you, the following line from Milton appears to indicate the relations between us :—

‘ Sufficient to have stood, *though free*, to Fall.’ ”

Here are two more.

It was in the days when monstrous chignons disfigured the heads of pretty girls :—

“ What great heads girls have nowadays,” said an old lady.

“ Yes,” said Shirley, “ they remind me of Shakespeare's line about the billows ‘ curling their monstrous heads,’ and they've got precious little inside them too.”

On one occasion, Yates relates in his “ Reminiscences,” talk turned on the horrors of catalepsy and being buried alive. Yates mentioned the Frankfort custom of depositing bodies in the dead-house for twenty-four hours before burial, with a bell-rope



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

attached to the wrist, by which a signal might at once be given in the event of returning animation.

“ Ah,” said Shirley, without a moment’s hesitation, “ that evidently suggested Tennyson’s line :

‘ Many a morning on the moorland did I hear the copses ring ! ’ ”

But, though Shirley’s mind was crammed full of poetry, he had no love for, or knowledge of, music.

One day Mr. Silver and Charles Keene had been singing in the chorus of the Handel Festival at the Crystal Palace, and arrived late, tired and hungry, at the *Punch* dinner. They enlarged upon the discomforts which they had undergone in the overcrowded trains, for there was no High-Level then. At first Shirley chaffed them pitilessly, declaring that the game was not worth the candle, that it was waste of time and all the rest of it. Then he changed his tone, confessing that he had no right to criticise their taste, for the concord of sweet sounds meant nothing to him. And then he stirred their laughter by telling how, totally ignorant of music as he was, in the exercise of his Jack-of-all-trades journalism, he had often supplied “ copy ” to the newspapers on musical subjects. Here was a fine fragment of his critical inventiveness :—

“ Over the deep abyss of bass there floated, like a poised lark, a silvery cloud of treble, amid which the shrill tremolo of the higher strings seemed quiveringly to glitter like the arrows of a sun-shaft through the mist of early morning.”

## HIS MEMORY

: that is drifting away from the point that I was  
his marvellous memory for poetry and his power  
in apting quotations to unexpected uses.

shall conclude this chapter by giving a passage  
a remarkable contribution made by him to the  
"Pocket Book," which, he assured the *Punch*  
, had been composed without any reference to  
poets whose work he so cleverly misused, and had  
him but little time or thought. He fitly entitled  
his production "Mnemosyne," and modestly declared  
himself "the greatest poet of this or any other age."  
In proof he sends this short poem (of some seventy  
lines which he has just "knocked off." Therein, he  
—and says, be it remarked, with a truthfulness  
: which there can be no question—he has  
combined the beauties of Milton, Shakespeare, and  
"owe," together with a score of other poets, includ-  
ing Mrs. Browning, "Festus" Bailey, Bryant, Byron,  
John Keats, Keble, Keble-Lytton, Akenside and Burns. As an effort of  
poetry it would, I think, be hard to beat, composed  
of rhyming lines divorced from their contexts  
and woven into a sounding, though, it must be  
admitted, wholly senseless, "poem."

would not be a bad exercise for a wet day to see  
how could appropriate to their authors the larger  
number of these pilfered lines :—

" Full many a gem of purest ray serene,  
That to be hated needs but to be seen,  
Invites my lays: be present, sylvan maids,  
And graceful deer reposing in the shades.  
I am the Morning and the Evening Star,  
Drag the slow barge or whirl the rapid car,

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

While wrapt in fire the realms of ether glow,  
Or private dirt on public virtue throw.  
How small of all that human hearts endure  
The short and simple annals of the poor !  
I would commend their bodies to the rack :  
At least we'll die with harness on our back.  
Remote, unfriended, melancholy, slow,  
Virtue alone is happiness below,  
As vipers sting, though dead, by some review ;  
And now thou see'st my soul's angelic hue !

\* \* \* \* \*

Lorenzo, to recriminate is just :  
Can storied urn or animated bust  
Survey mankind from China to Peru,  
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew ?

“ Why to yon mountain turns the musing eye ?  
Is there no bright reversion in the sky ?  
Not to admire is all the art I know,  
Or by the lazy Scheld, or wandering Po ;  
Why was my Cressid then so hard to win ?  
The light is quenched she looked so lovely in,  
As Argus' eyes, by Hermes' wand oppressed,  
Sank pleased, but hungry, on her Sawney's breast.

“ Time fleeted, years on years had passed away,  
(Laymen have leave to dance, if parsons play) ;  
Her silent watch the pensive mother keeps,  
And Cupids ride the lion of the deeps.  
And I would sooner stop the unchained dove,  
In every gesture dignity and love,  
And round its snowy wing new fetters twine,  
Than print one stolen verse, one borrowed line.’

## CHAPTER V

Characteristics (continued)—Love for Children—Sympathy—  
Birthdays—Generosity—Modesty—Industry—Writing to the  
Papers—Dreams—As Letter-writer—"Alton Locke."



ERELY to say that Shirley never grew old would be misleading. He always seemed to himself a boy masquerading as a man. He retained his freshness to the last. He was especially in his element when surrounded by children. To see him the centre of a group of wide-eyed youngsters reading his favourite poem, "The Jabberwock," or "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland," was to see him

only as the biggest youngster among them.

One day, dining with Mr. and Mrs. Silver at their charming house in The Terrace, Kensington, once occupied by John Leech, now swept away by the avalanche of bricks and mortar, Shirley talked of Leech's love for children. The thought of his dead

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

friend checked his gaiety for the moment, and, as went on to talk of his own little boys, he said :—

“ I’m afraid I rather spoil them, but really I can help it. We can never be too kind to our own children. We should always remember the wrong we have done them by bringing them without their leave into this bad world.”

Soon, however, he lifted the talk to the level of cheerfulness by saying :

“ Yes, you see, I’m like the Persians, a sincere worshipper ! ”

But it was not his way to bore people by talking too long of his own affairs, and he as promptly turned the conversation to what he thought would be of more interest to his young hostess, who then was new to England. France, of course, must be what she wished to talk of most. And, if France, then Jeanne d’Arc.

“ How proud you must be that you were born in France, as she was ! ” he exclaimed.

Then he went on to say that, except, of course, the Holy Virgin, she seemed to him the most inspired and heavenly-minded of all the noble women who had ever lived.

It was this ready sympathy that made him especially beloved of women and children. And he was always alive to their little affairs, their little interests.

It was characteristic of what “ Ponny ” Mayhew called his “ ready-money ” memory that he did not ignore what most men would consider beneath their notice. He knew that great things could, like grown-

## BIRTHDAYS

people, take care of themselves. It was the little things of life, like little children, that needed fostering.

It was part of his religion to remember birthdays. They were the rubrics of his breviary, the saints' days of his friendships, and, however overwhelmed with work he was, few days passed without his marking them with a birthday letter to somebody.

Once at the *Punch* Table, to the surprise of Mr. Silver, who had no idea that Shirley even knew Mrs. Silver's birthday, he raised his glass to her health, and sent the following story as a birthday present :—

A small boy declared that there were but eight commandments. He knew that there *had* been ten. "But Bobby broke two yesterday. He first stole my sugar-plums and then said he hadn't seen them."

Mrs. Silver still remembers a pretty little compliment he paid her, partly no doubt because it was the sort of compliment a woman never forgets, partly too because, in those days, she wondered at an Englishman having the wit to pay it. Mr. Silver had been telling him of a fly-catcher nesting in their urban garden and sitting quietly on her nest throughout a large garden party, although all the ladies were brought up in turn to look at her.

"What a good little woman!" exclaimed Shirley.

Then, turning to Mrs. Silver, he said in his courtliest manner :

"I fear I'm rather sceptical about the goodness of good women, but, whenever I'm talking with you, I become quite a believer in it."

Shirley had much of the simplicity of a great man

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

combined with the sophistication of a man of the world. His kindness was innate, and kept alive by observances; his business-like qualities were the result of definite moral determination. It was the first that made him beloved by all around him, the last that brought him the success he deserved.

As he was never too busy to write a birthday letter, so he was never too busy to cut a scrap out of a newspaper, or copy out a passage from a book, and send it to the person whom it would most gratify.

On this point Mrs. Jopling Rowe writes: "With all his untiring kindness, speaking to, and writing to everyone whom he thought might help me, he never wished or expected thanks. . . . He never let one feel under an obligation to him. . . . Busy as his life was, he always found time to give a helping hand to those in need of it."

As it was with friends, so it was with certain of his relations and acquaintances who were anything but friends. The diaries are punctuated with notes of letters to and from what he called his "suckers"—poor and improvident and ungrateful kinsmen, poor and unfortunate acquaintances of early days who now presumed on former friendship—or the reverse—to demand assistance, and poor and unsuccessful writers who knew him, or did not know him, and who traded on his recognised generosity.

These were, of course, in a different category from his father, the responsibility for whose maintenance for many years he cheerfully assumed as a matter of course.

## CURIOSITY

We may not much admire Shirley's love of gossip. Curiosity was indeed a note of his character. But it was not all or mostly morbid. Gossip on a point of literary interest or scholarship appealed to him as much as gossip about people. He would hoard up a piquant morsel until the moment came for firing it off with best effect.

One day he records in his diary how he had been shown at the "Garrick" a manuscript by Pope containing an unpublished and appalling line on the Duke of Marlborough :

" 'Madness and lust,' said God, 'shall be thy heirs.' "

With this in his head he went to that night's dinner-party, waited for the psychological moment, and then flung it down. In his own words, "it burst on them like a shell." He gloated over it as an anarchist over a successful piece of bomb-throwing.

He was not a learned man in the ordinary sense. He was inquisitive and never forgot. Knowledge had accumulated rather than been acquired. What he knew had not come in streams, cutting grooves in his mind. It had come in drops, gradually flooding it. Thus he became broad-minded, level-minded, tolerant. *Tout comprendre* was with him *tout pardonner*. Knowledge was of the heart as well as of the brain. He was a walking *Notes and Queries*, bound up with a "Dictionary of Quotations" of his own making.

And then his industry. For years he contributed weekly at least two columns to *Punch*, which was printed much closer in those days, a page of gossip to



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

the *Illustrated London News*, and leaders to the twin editions of *Home News*. And most of the time he would have a burlesque or melodrama on hand, or a serial novel appearing in monthly numbers.

There was no typewriting in those days. He had no secretary. Every scrap of transcribing was done with his own hand, and, what was more, it was a joy to the type-setters. Barring Thackeray, whose eyes, though short-sighted, were, unlike Sam Weller's, of "hextra" magnifying power, he wrote a clearer and smaller hand than any of the *Punch* men of his day.

And his brain worked smoothly as his hand, like the parts of a well-balanced machine.

Few men, I should fancy, ever wrote six songs in one day at three guineas apiece, but Shirley did, and, what is worse, was proud of having done it.

In a word, Shirley was a man wrought almost to the pitch of journalistic perfection. Outwardly monotonous, inwardly his work was alive with variety. Ostensibly a slavery, it came to be the very acme of freedom. The periodical press was his world, and he never lost the flavour of its many little, its rarely exalted, triumphs. Even after he became the powerful editor of a powerful periodical, he continued to note in his diary the quotations made from *his* contributions in the pages of his contemporaries, and he never tired of firing off letters to the *Times*, and never ceased to triumph at seeing his name in print.

This was also a fad of his father's, who apparently spent a good part of his leisurely old age in writing to the papers or to persons in exalted positions. Many

## ALWAYS LEARNING

of these epistles were rather indiscreet. Fortunately he used to send them to Shirley to correct, which he sometimes did and sometimes treated more drastically. Here is an example. On June 20th, 1865, he writes in his diary : " Letter from the governor to the Queen, begging and praying that the new Prince may not be called ' Emmanuel,' as it is wicked. But I do not think it will influence her, for several reasons, one being that I will not send it."

Shirley was not, I think, so much conceited, as interested in himself as a phenomenon amongst phenomena. Constantly we catch him in his diaries struck with astonishment that one small brain, perhaps a few grains heavier than the average, could carry, and make use of, all he knew.

Indeed, I find him rather modest than conceited, not regarding himself as a great man, but alive to the fun of being so regarded. Certainly he was never too proud to learn of his colleagues or anyone else.

Here are two undated letters which may stand for examples :—

SHIRLEY BROOKS TO PERCIVAL LEIGH.

" 6 KENT TERRACE,  
" REGENT'S PARK,  
" Saturday.

" MY DEAR LEIGH,

" Here's *your* weather, and how are the field-fares ?

" I want to ask you a semi-classical question. First, how would you Latinize *Shirley* ? Second, what would you make its genitive ? I have no doubt, but

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

I want an authoritative testimony, as I profess only a skimmy classicality.

“My fingers are too cold to write more; just give me a line in reply.

“Ever yours,  
“S. B.”

DITTO TO DITTO.

“MY DEAR LEIGH,

“Of your charity. Is Phlegethon, river in hell, accented on the *first* syllable? If so, never mind. If not, do like a good fellow ask for an epigram in which I have made it rhyme to ‘eggeth on,’ and alter it into something else. It seems outrageous to be uncertain, but away from books and thoughtful habits, uncertainties come on one, and I have a touch of colchicum, though not much.

“Ever,  
“S. B.”

Like many other men actively engaged in mental labour and careless of their digestions, Shirley hardly knew the meaning of dreamless sleep. And his dreams were so much a matter of interest to him that he laid himself out to record them in his diary. Here are some amusing examples :—

“*Feb. 26th, 1870.*

“Fancy I dreamed of receiving a deputation from the lower orders, asking that public men might not quote Latin. Replied that no offence was meant, and that it was only a sort of Shibboleth, like the brutal language of the lower orders themselves. Yet meant to be considerate and respectful.”

## ODD DREAMS

"Sept. 11th, 1870.

"Did not sleep over well, and had unpleasant dreams about one, of whom, waking, I never think but in love. These things should show us the abject folly of caring for a dream, yet, as Shelley says, it can 'poison sleep.'"

"Nov. 8th, 1870.

"Odd dreams; saw a girl who was engaged, but, wishing it secret, had put the ring, a signet with words, on her little toe!"

"August 8th, 1873.

"Had odd dreams, but I find that unless one records even the vividest dream in the most detailed and exact way, one utterly forgets it. A mere reference is useless, though when making it one seems never likely to forget the vision. This is noteworthy—words *really* said to one would certainly be recalled by a slight memorandum."

"August 29th, 1873.

"Idiotic dream, of which I see I took note, about my grandfather S., who was going to wrong me by marrying a nymph, called Daphne. Perhaps he will explain 'in another place.'"

"Sept. 13th, 1873.

"Slept well, and dreamt that one of my little toes had come off, but I did not seem to care. Where is the Daniel to expound?"

"Dec. 22nd, 1873.

"Had an odd dream—thought I was reading Milton, and came on a passage in which the angel, *i.e.*, some angel, talking to innocent and naked Eve, told her that all the angels believed that when God had made Adam, the Deity had done all He meant to do for the world, and that no angel believed He would create

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

for it a *being so like themselves*. A very civil angel, but is there anything like it in 'P. L.'? I don't think so."

"(1873.)

"Dreamed a glorious dream! P. of Wales came to Garrick Club. I did not seek to speak to him, but, hearing my name, he said 'Are you C. W. S. B.?' 'That is my name, sir.' 'But I am d—d if you shall have it longer—you shall be a baronet. I'll see to that; think of Sir Isaac Newton.'"

Early in the "sixties," he said at the *Punch* Table\* : "I often travel in Dreamland, but seldom come away with anything worth going for. I once dreamed that I saw Bradbury whacking "Pater" Evans on the knuckles with a walking-stick, and distinctly heard him quote *Lady Macbeth*—'See how our Partner's rapt.'" †

Thereupon Sir John Tenniel recalled a couplet dreamed by Douglas Jerrold,

"And now our hero's grown so tall  
His knees are on his head."

Then Mark Lemon said that he once dreamed a play, got out of bed, sat down in his night gear, sketched the plot out clearly, caught a violent cold, and made a hundred pounds by it.

Keene, too, said that he often dreamed a *Punch* drawing, and Tom Taylor wound up the conversation by telling how he dreamed that he had been operated upon for stone. After seeing several extracted, there came finally a large one bearing a Latin label, which

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\* From Mr. Silver's notes.

† Here Shirley's memory tripped. It was *Banquo* who used the expression, and he said "Look," not "See."

## AS LETTER-WRITER

he tried in vain to decipher. He awoke to find his wife's knee pressing into his back!—no doubt the *causa causans* of the dream.

It is admitted that Shirley was a great talker, but he did not talk to hear his own voice. He talked because he had interesting things to say, and he talked because there were interesting things to be discovered. He used conversation as a spade to dig up the thoughts of others as well as his own. He talked because it was a pleasure, just as he worked because work was the greatest pleasure of all. A lover of ease, he got the reward of rousing himself to energy. A lover of society, he never allowed its attractions to master him. A lover of books, he was not betrayed into pedantry. Loving life, he recognised that it was a mortal disease. Living in the presence of death, he did not allow its nearness to damp his ardour for activity.

In this and the preceding chapter I have endeavoured to open the case for Shirley Brooks as he appeared to those around him. In the following pages he will often be given the opportunity of speaking for himself in his letters and diaries. For although, through all his working hours, his pen was in his hand, Shirley did not throw it down when his work was done. Next to chatting with a friend face to face, he loved to chat with him on paper. His correspondence was enormous. He cultivated letter-writing as an art. Few of even his shortest notes but had a story, an epigram, a sentence worth preserving. As Mortimer Collins said of him, he loved to play with ideas, blow iridescent bubbles of thought, and showed "the apprehensive

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

forgetive faculty" in its perfection. He wrote sparkling, witty, kindly letters, about nothing and everything, by the hundred. As William Blanchard Jerrold says of this and other qualities :—

" In some of his letters he frolicked like a schoolboy ; in others he would set seriously to work to solve or illustrate some literary subject that had accidentally turned up. He would enter upon a long correspondence to serve a friend. You never found him exhausted, seldom tired. If you caught him lounging by the dainty conservatory he had in his house, after a long day upstairs in his study, he would be reading the last *Quarterly*, or dallying with a novel by one of his friends—but he would brighten for a talk, and be sure to shine in it. When he had finished his correspondence for the day, after his work, he would take his letters to the post himself. It was his orderly way. You could see his methodical mind in the precise writing, the unbroken lines, the absence of any sign of haste from his shortest notes. His books and pictures were arranged with extraordinary neatness. He had photograph albums of friends, with their autographs and characteristic bits from their letters contrived with exquisite care under each. One letter of his, which I happen to have under my hand, is a good example of his unsleeping watchfulness over all about him, over the welfare of a friend, over the success of any undertaking in which he was concerned. The opening paragraph refers to some domestic joke we had in common :—

*" 4th Monday in Lent (March 24th), 1873.*

" MY DEAR WILLIAM,

" I can write to you. The consciousness of innocence sits upon my brow, and also flutters over my inkstand, which I consider a rather fine image.

## A HELPING HAND

"The C. K. memorial\* will, I hope, be a success. Routledge began it, and is very energetic. It ought to be something artistic, at Windsor. Some folks are pushing about an 'educational tribute,' etc., but I think we need not flavour *everything* with the smell of corduroy. 'Tis quite dominant enough already. You *ought* to be on the committee. . . .

"Do you know Mrs. L. R. ? † She is a young artist of great merit. Frith and Tom Taylor prophesy a great career for her, and she is studying in Paris—having exhibited many pictures here, at the Academy, etc. It would be very kind if L. or you, or both, would give her a call, if you can. I subjoin the address. I know not what part of Paris it is in—you will. If you go, say that you are friends of mine, and that Mrs. Brooks will call on her when she comes. You will like her—she is very bright.

"No news but those you read in the papers. They say to-day that Jessel is to be Master of the Rolls at once.

"If M. Doré is in Paris, I beg my best compliments to him. Do you see Plimsoll wanted, or wants, him to paint a picture on the coffin-ships? And wouldn't he do it grandly! Kindest regards.

"Ever yours,

"SHIRLEY BROOKS."

It may be noted that Doré declined the subject—deeming it a political one, on the merits of which he was not competent to pronounce judgment with his brush."

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\* The memorial to Charles Knight, of which Shirley Brooks was honorary secretary.

† Mrs. Frank Romer, now Mrs. Jopling Rowe.



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

I shall conclude this chapter with the earliest letter from Shirley's pen which has come into my hands. For it I am indebted to Mr. W. L. Fleming. It is interesting for more than one reason. In the first place the publication of an "Alton Locke" in these days would hardly be looked upon as a daring act. In the second place we discover the revolt against the three-volume novel already beginning, though not destined to come to a head for several decades. In the third place, we find Shirley rightly prophesying the sensation which was to be caused by Charles Kingsley's famous novel.

SHIRLEY BROOKS TO MESSRS. CHAPMAN & HALL.

"63 LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS,

"Tuesday. (1849.)

"DEAR SIRS,

"I should have done myself the pleasure of asking personally the question I write to ask, but hardly knew which member of your firm to enquire for. Let me premise that my making the following enquiry, and any reply you may send me will be confidential matter. The editor of the *Morning Chronicle* (with which I am connected) has requested from me a review of an extraordinary novel just published by your house, 'Alton Locke.' I have not been so struck by any work I have taken up for years, and shall endeavour to make the article upon it a decided exception to the ordinary notices one writes of fictional works. It is a gratifying thing to see that a publisher *dares* to publish such a work, an evidence of courage, which, combined with the two-volume system, promises a speedy doom to the 'novel mongering' practices of the hour. But this is by the way. I am anxious to ask you whether you are at liberty or inclined to

“ALTON LOCKE”

et me know the author's name. I will, of course, preserve the secret, and give no clue whatever to it, if that be your wish, but I could deal much more satisfactorily with the work if I knew anything of the writer's antecedents. If, therefore, you are at liberty to use your discretion in this matter, perhaps you will do so, and give me whatever information you may think it expedient to afford.

“ ‘Alton Locke’ *must* make a strange sensation.

“ Believe me, dear Sirs,

“ Yours very truly,

“ SHIRLEY BROOKS.”

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

as well as to our judgment, he has become the sublimation, the incorporation so to speak, of the aphorism that there is many a true word spoken in jest. Further he has firmly grasped the fact that he is gilder-in-chief to the nation of not always palatable pills. For those who look on *Punch* merely as the Jester are curiously short-sighted. They are ignorant or oblivious of the fact that his policy is as carefully considered as that of his most serious contemporaries. He has, of course often been wrong, but, though it may sound paradoxical it is nevertheless true that, had he not been often wrong, he could not have been oftener right. For it is the Exigency of Being or Doing, especially with those who take a line for themselves, to be wrong sometimes. That cannot be avoided, except by not Being nor Doing at all. And we, looking back on *Punch's* career, can see that though he has not always been right, he has generally been on the side of the angels.

But, those will say who only look at the outside of things, Shirley Brooks was editor of *Punch* for only four years. Whereon does his claim to be a great *Punch* force rest? The answer is easy. His claim does not alone rest on what he did whilst occupying the editorial chair. It rests also on what he did as chief lieutenant to Mark Lemon. For years he was the hidden mainspring, the power behind the throne. Mark Lemon made no secret of this. Again and again he declared that Shirley was the one man upon whom he could depend in any emergency, and when, though still nominally editor, he was laid aside, it was to

## A GENIUS OF JUDGMENT

Shirley's shoulders that all responsibility was transferred. The truth of this will become more and more apparent as the story unfolds itself.

It is, as Mortimer Collins writing of Shirley Brooks said, "the misfortune of those who expend their main energy on periodic literature that their real genius is not often recognised." After an evening spent with Theodore Hook, Coleridge said that he was as great a genius as Dante. That was no doubt hyperbole, but what he meant was that genius may expend itself on ephemeral themes, and consequently escape recognition. And, though the man may lose in glory, the profit to the public may be greater than if he had devoted himself to more permanent forms. Indeed, unhesitatingly it may be said that amongst the geniuses, and I do not use the word lightly, which have sat at *Punch's* Table, there have been some who might have been nameless for all the recognition they ever had at the hands of the public. And though I do not claim for Shirley Brooks the literary genius that certain of his contemporaries did, I do, with Mortimer Collins, claim for him that he had a genius of judgment, a genius for throwing the halo of humour and romance around political and social topics, a genius for taking the sting from political strife, a genius for lightening the atmosphere, for reconciling class with class.

These, I think, are the keynotes of *Punch's* general policy, not only to shoot folly as it flies, but to put things on a less serious, and so a truer, basis.

Anybody who searches the pages of *Punch* for himself must have this borne in upon him. And no one on the

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

staff ever carried out this policy more loyally and more honestly than did Shirley Brooks.

At the same time it must be remembered that, in his public capacity, a journalist has not altogether a free hand. He must always keep the law of libel engraven on his heart. He must consider the interests of his employers. He must look to the prosperity of their paper. Thus it comes about that what he dares to publish is but an inadequate rendering of what he really knows and thinks. It is of necessity compact of reservations.

That is why we want to get behind the scenes and supplement the public utterances of the journalist with the private utterances of his letters and diaries. That is why we have the legitimate desire to know what the men, who have helped to mould public opinion, are in real life. Then we can read between the lines. Then the stale wine, whose virtue has evaporated with age, will fizz and sparkle once again.

An extreme example of what I mean is given in the recently published "Letters of George Birkbeck Hill" :—

" At a Royal Academy dinner Browning was seated next to Disraeli, who remarked to the poet that the walls were covered with rubbish. Shortly afterwards, however, on getting up to speak, Disraeli enlarged on the glories of English art, especially on the portrait-painting and the landscapes, and pointed to the walls. When he sat down, Browning asked him how he reconciled with his speech what he had said to him privately. He replied, ' My dear Browning, are you so ignorant

## FIRST CONTRIBUTION TO "PUNCH"

as not to know the difference between a man's private and public utterances?' " When Browning repeated this to Gladstone he "looked severe and sternly said 'Hellish.'" But could Mr. Gladstone have put his hand on his heart and declared that he had never in his life been guilty of mental reservation—only different in degree from direct misrepresentation? If not, then he was often in the same box as his great rival, for if truth means anything, it means the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

And Shirley Brooks was in like case with every statesman, every journalist, every man but One who has ever lived. He who has most to say has most to conceal. A Rousseau may profess to say everything, but even he cannot. It is left to a Froude to show us the real Carlyle, and even then but in part.

It was at the end of 1851 that Mark Lemon accepted Shirley's first sporadic contribution, and before six months were past he was making a weekly appearance in *Punch* with his novelette, "Miss Violet and her Offers." Yates considered that "weekly" should in this instance be spelled with an "a," but there I differ from him. It seems to me a good deal more readable than much of Shirley's work that Yates admired. It seems to me instinct with the unaffected gaiety of a young girl, and though perhaps not very well suited to the pages of *Punch*, something in the nature of a *tour de force*. Anyhow, Bentley was so struck by the young author's ability, as displayed in what Sala called "this vivacious tale of modern life," that he sought

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

him out and made overtures to him for a novel, for the famous *Miscellany*.

The papers were republished in book form in 1875, the year after Shirley's death, in conjunction with "The Naggletons." The idea of republishing these last had been mooted as early as 1871, when Shirley wrote in his diary :—

"Whitefriars. They want to bring out my 'Naggletons' in a separate form. Some of it is smart enough ; I do not see any objection."

But this was delayed by his proposal to write up the dialogues and so connect them by a stronger thread of interest—a proposal which, in the event, his overwhelming engagements rendered impossible.

Mr. and Mrs. Naggleton can never converse without falling foul of one another. The following may stand for an example of Shirley's earlier contributions, and the more fitly because, unhappily, there is in it some echo of his own domestic differences :—

SCENE.—*The Zoological Gardens. A beautiful afternoon.*

*Sunday. The clock over the camel says half-past three. A large gathering of the Upper Ten Thousand.*

MR. and MRS. NAGGLETON, the MISSES EMMELINE and CECILIA NAGGLETON, and the MASTERS EDGAR, WALTER, and PETER NAGGLETON, all in spring array, enter, and advance up the Broad Walk.

*Mrs. Naggleton.* Pierre, do not hop. This is Sunday.

*Mr. N.* Yes, remember, Peter, nothing hops on Sundays, except the birds, who know no better, having no private tutors.

## “THE NAGGLETONS”

*Mrs. N.* That is right ; make him laugh at his mother's advice.

*Mr. N.* On the contrary, my dear, I would imprint it on his memory. Though I don't know why he shouldn't hop, like the little hills.

*Mrs. N.* I am not acquainted with the family you mention, and I do not wish them proposed as models for my children.

*Mr. N.* Nicely you attend to your Brady and Tate, Mrs. Naggleton.

*Mrs. N.* (*recollecting and sternly.*) Pray, Henry, abstain from such profanity while your children are within hearing.

*Mr. N.* Profanity is in intention, my dear. Mr. Snotchley had the sense to quote that, when you were good enough to laugh at his old joke about Paul being a cricketer, because he stood up for the eleven and was bowled, and Rhoda stood at the wicket.

*Mrs. N.* That was real wit, and I wonder you understood it.

*Mr. N.* Oh, wonderful husband, that can so astonish his wife ! Shakespeare.

*Mrs. N.* I think you might do better than mouth out Shakespeare on Sunday. Emmeline, come away from the bears !

*Mr. N.* Bless me, they came here to see the beasts, and they shall see them. Jump, Syllabubs. (*Lifts her to the rail.*) Here, Walter, take this fourpenny bit, and see how many stale buns that young lady will give you.

*Mrs. N.* Teaching your children to break the Sabbath in that manner !

*Mr. N.* I am teaching them to break nothing except buns. Isn't a bear to be fed on Sunday, especially when he has fallen into a pit ? That's a man, Walter—a bun a-piece. Where's the stick ? Here we are. Now, Mr. Bear, climb for your lunch !



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

*Mrs. N.* I shall walk on to the chairs on the grass. I can at least avoid witnessing what I disapprove.

*Mr. N.* All right, dear ; go and stare at the bonnets, while we finish our secular duties.

*(Exit MRS. N.)*

*Walter.* Come on, Papa, don't give all the buns to these stupid beasts. I want to give something to the 'ippopotamus.

*Mr. N.* So you ought, in return for the "h" you've taken away from him.

*(Shout of laughter from the children. MRS. N. looks angrily up from the plateau below, and*

*MR. N. thinks it wisest to rejoin her.)*

*Emmeline.* O, Mamma, what do you think Papa said ?

*Mrs. N.* Nothing, my love, which I wish you to repeat. Walk on quietly, two and two.

*Mr. N.* Too-too-too, dears, like a penny trumpet.

*(Another shout.)*

*Mrs. N.* This behaviour is more disgraceful, Henry, than I could have believed your conduct ever would be. Really, this is not a place for you. You must suppose that you are in some low tea-garden, among the rabble.

*Mr. N.* No, my dear. These are the gardens of the Royal Zoological Society, Regent's Park, N.W., and I am a fellow, and it's your fault if I am not a jolly fellow. It's the most enjoyable place in London, or, as you would say, in this extensive metropolis, and I came here to enjoy myself, and—deducting conjugalties—so I do. Go where you like, children, but mind, don't put your fingers between the bars of a single den—and I say *(solemnly)*, mind this : if one of you children gets eaten, I'll never speak to that child again.

*(Loud shout, and away go the young ones.)*

*Mrs. N.* Catch me coming here again with you.

*Mr. N.* I didn't ask you to come.

## “THE NAGGLETONS”

*Mrs. N.* No, I am not accusing you of any such civility.

*Mr. N.* You asked yourself to come, and I wish that at the same time you'd asked yourself whether you couldn't come in a decent temper.

*Mrs. N.* You are the only person, I have often said, who ever dared to find fault with my temper.

*Mr. N.* Perhaps, as I have often answered, because I am the only person on whom you ever dared to try it.

*Mrs. N. (smiling.)* That speaks well for your dignity as the Head of the Family.

*Mr. N.* It speaks better, perhaps, for my patience, which some day you will try too far.

*Mrs. N.* It is so manly to threaten a helpless woman who is chained for life.

*Mr. N.* If she is, she needn't rattle her chains incessantly. But come, it is Sunday, and you have been to church, and earned a right to neglect all the minor duties, such as kindness and politeness. Won't you take a chair?

*Mrs. N.* Not in front, certainly, that all your set, Dick, Tom, and Harry, may come up and claim acquaintance with one.

*Mr. N.* You were glad enough to know my set once.

*Mrs. N.* You thought so.

*Mr. N.* You said so. Excuse me for believing it, and two or three other things.

*Mrs. N.* Ah! (*A cyclopædia of useful knowledge in that little noise.*)

(*They take chairs behind the rail, and observe the elegant company seated, passing, and repassing.*)

*Mr. N.* If it wasn't Sunday, I should say "My eye what a pretty girl!"

*Mrs. N.* Painted flirt!

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

*Mr. N.* Lovely hair, come.

*Mrs. N.* Bought—I hope paid for.

*Mr. N.* She is very like Lady Annabel Lee whom you rave about.

*Mrs. N.* I never rave about anybody, and that person is as like Lady Annabel as I am like your grandmother.

*Mr. N. (brutally.)* H'm!

*Mrs. N. (disdaining to notice such atrocious coarseness.)* I wonder who that distinguished-looking man is? You never know anybody, so it's no use asking you.

*Mr. N.* I know in this case.

*Mrs. N.* Pardon me if I don't believe it. He is evidently somebody. His dress and manner are those of the best society.

*Mr. N.* How should you know?

*Mrs. N.* I may be unfortunately circumstanced as regards my own position, but I have a lady's instinct, which never leads me astray in forming a judgment.

*Mr. N.* Well, it is right enough this time.

*Mrs. N.* Of course it is. Whom do you suppose that gentleman to be?

*Mr. N.* I don't suppose about it. (*Calls out to the Distinguished Somebody, "How are you, Blobby?"*)

*(The Distinguished Somebody looks round, and MRS. NAGGLETON turns red with shame and anger. But the Distinguished Somebody comes up to the rail, and shakes hands with MR. NAGGLETON.)*

*D. S.* Hawful 'ot, ain't it, my boy?

*Mr. N.* Stunning! I have the superior honour of introducing you to my wife. Mr. Blobbings—Mrs. Naggleton. (*She shudders a fraction of a bow.*) And how's tallow?

*D. S.* Sputtery, sputtery. But sink the shop on

## DINES AT "PUNCH" TABLE

Sunday, my bricksy-wicksy! Be genteel, my boy, if the house is a-fire. Splendid day, M'm.

Mrs. N. (*faintly*.) Very fine. Where are those children?

(*Walks off, and is shortly afterwards overtaken by the faithful MR. NAGGLETON.*)

That is a fair example of these thirty-three conversations, at the close of which Mrs. Naggleton's aunt, Henrietta Flaggerty, dies and leaves the unhappy couple twenty thousand pounds on condition "that they entirely and for ever abandon their habit of scolding, snarling, and sneering, and study to converse politely, if not affectionately . . . and immediately discard the name of Naggleton, and for ever hereafter bear the name of—Lovey-Dovey." The conditions are accepted, and "so ends the History of the Naggletons," the author promising that the public shall one day have a peep at the Lovey-Doveys, a promise destined never to be fulfilled.

Despite many statements to the contrary, Shirley did not become a member of the *Punch* staff until May, 1852, on the 18th day of which month he dined for the first time at the Table, "\* the famous board of which we all have heard . . . but very few of us seen . . . a rather primitive piece of joinery . . . (*pace* Thackeray's 'Mahogany Tree') . . . but with associations which render it a treasure among treasures, a rich and priceless gem. For at this table nearly every man upon the Staff has, from the day it was made, sat, and carved his initials upon it with a penknife, when

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\* Spielmann's "History of *Punch et passim*."

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

officially elevated to *Punch's* peerage. As each has died, his successor has taken his place—just as the *Institut de France* creates Immortals to fill the chairs made vacant by death—and has cut his initials or his mark close by those of the men who occupied the place before him. . . .”

## CHAPTER VII

The *Punch* Table (cont.)—The “Essence of Parliament.”



FOR the following picture of Shirley at the *Punch* Table I am indebted, as for much else, to my friend, Mr. Henry Silver.

“It was,” he writes, “early in the ‘fifties’ when I first met Shirley Brooks, and for more than twenty years I had the pleasure of his friendship. We dined

together well nigh weekly at the *Punch* Table, and we used frequently to meet elsewhere, both in and out of Clubland. His voice was ever gay and cheerful, ‘an excellent thing in woman,’ and in men not less so—especially at dinner-time. And when by any chance some ‘brilliant flash of silence’ had fallen on the company, he was generally the first to say a pleasant word or two that started a fresh subject.

“It was in the spring of 1852, while ‘Miss Violet’ was describing her delightful little ‘Offers,’ that I met for the first time the author of her being. Our interview took place not far from Temple Bar, which blocked the end of Fleet Street, and had not yet been supplanted by the prancing civic Griffin. In a dingy

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

little room there, and a copious armchair, sat enthroned our massive Editor (Mark Lemon), whose beaming smile enlightened the dismal audience chamber. Upon his cheery introduction, Shirley honoured me at sight, as a banker does 'good paper,' and we heartily shook hands as though for years we had been intimate. 'You'll pull in the same boat,' said Mark, 'and I hope you'll pull together'; and then, as I had still some youthful modesty left in me, I might fitly have invented Douglas Jerrold's famous joke about the 'very different skulls'—if it had happily occurred to me.

"There is hanging in my drawing-room, among a dozen of delightful pencil drawings by John Tenniel, a tiny, upright, full-length figure, which by way of emphasis he drew in water colours. This is an imaginary portrait of our good friend *Mr. Punch*, and is contained within a circle of two inches and a half in diameter. Around the famous little personage, and branching from the circle like the fingers of a star-fish, are the signatures of those who weekly used to dine with him. Underneath the drawing is pencilled the inscription, '*Mr. Punch* and his Privy Council. *Anno Domini* 1858; *Anno Punchii* XVIII.' At the head of the Table sat the chief proprietor, and then proceeding in due sequence from his left hand to his right, the following were the names and usual places of the guests: William Bradbury, Tom Taylor, John Leech, John Tenniel, Mark Lemon, Frederick M. Evans, Percival Leigh, C. Shirley Brooks, Henry Silver, W. M. Thackeray. Such in the later 'fifties' was the usual order of the Table from the death of Douglas Jerrold in June, 'fifty-seven,' to the coming of Charles Keene in February, 1860.

"Five o'clock tea was not invented in the 'fifties.' Society had not discovered how *dulce est tea-sipere in*

## THE "BIG CUT"

*loco*—in the place of early dining. So the dinner hour was six, and Shirley always was a punctual comer, though he worked harder than most of us. But one may often notice that the guests who come the latest are generally those who have the least to do. Dining *à la Russe* was hardly known in London half-a-century ago, and *Mr. Punch* was an old-fashioned and most hospitable host, and, as the phrase went, 'liked to see his dinner' before eating it. So the joints were carved at table by those who sat at head and tail of it; or in their absence by the Editor, or some other of the guests. Shirley always shirked the labour of the carving knife, although he never shrank from the work of the "Big Cut." Indeed, the only carving that he did at the *Punch* Table was when he carved his own initials on it, as did all the rest of us, clumsy-fingered though we were (excepting, indeed, Thackeray, whose wood-carving, like his writing, was extremely neat). At dinner Shirley far preferred to cut a joke than carve a joint, and among the 'good things' that were served or said at table, he had especial relish for good stories or *bon mots*, which he was always ready to relate or to invent.

"I kept a diary in those days, as many scribblers do, before they cut their wisdom teeth and learn that time is precious stuff and journals precious nonsense. Therein I used to chronicle the talk of the Round Table, and the names of the good knights who weekly sat at meat. I specially recorded, too, the birth of the Cartoon, and any special circumstance attending that notable event. The honour of the parentage might in general be claimed by either Shirley or Tom Taylor, but the Editor not seldom was the proud and happy father, or else our Hampshire poet and 'Professor,' Percival Leigh. Leech, who in the 'fifties' drew most of the Cartoons, cared little about politics,



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

and his voice was seldom heard in the debate. But he would sometimes end it suddenly, by declaring that he couldn't 'see' the subject as suggested, and then his quick fancy would forthwith invent a better."

It was, of course, only by gradual degrees that Shirley arrived at his recognised position as suggester-in-chief, and even then more must not be claimed for him than was his due. The suggestion might come from him but the final decision rested with Mark Lemon and the rest of *Mr. Punch's* Cabinet Council. True, Shirley, immersed in literature, never really quit of his reading, "the sayer of good things you thought over," provided the literary backbone which was lacking in his chief. For Mark Lemon, clever as he was, had not the cultured mind, the finer taste, of his lieutenant. His were the higher animal spirits, Shirley's the keener tongue. He was chiefly the man of the world, Shirley chiefly the man of letters. But both were equally devoted to the cause of *Punch*, the qualities of the one supplementing in his service the qualities of the other. If Mark fully weighed every suggestion made by his lieutenant, Shirley as loyally abided by the decision of his chief, for whose policy and conduct of the paper he had the greatest admiration. This he proved when the time came for him to hold the reins in his own hands. "No editor," writes Mr. Spielmann, "ever laid himself out more carefully to follow in his predecessor's footsteps. . . . During the Franco-German war Shirley Brooks astonished some of his *confères* by rejecting a cartoon suggested at the weekly dinner, because he felt sure that, despite its cleverness, 'Uncle

## SUGGESTER-IN-CHIEF

Mark would not have accepted it'; for 'Uncle Mark' was peculiarly sensitive in his respect for religious prejudice and sentiment, except when discussing Roman Catholicism or Jesuitry. The cartoon in question was to have depicted King William writing home to his wife one of those pious epistles which gave such an air of earnestness to his work: 'We have victoriously broken through another treaty, by the help of God.' Mark Lemon had an exaggerated view of the responsibility of his position, and Shirley Brooks conducted the paper rigidly on the old lines."

Indeed, despite obvious differences, there was much in common between Mark Lemon and Shirley. As Jerrold wrote: "Both were men of the old-fashioned, courteous address. In their denials they appeared to be conferring a favour. To the humble they were gentle; and they had their reward in the zeal with which all people . . . pressed to serve them."

In speaking of Shirley as the chief suggester of cartoons, care, of course, must be taken not to ignore the great part played by the artists who carried out these suggestions with such conspicuous ability. But the cartoonists of this period were not, I believe, very strong politicians. They were great *chic* artists, who loyally devoted their powerful pencils to the pictorial expression of the opinions of those who were responsible for the conduct of the paper.

And if Shirley justified his existence at the *Punch* Table by making, and getting adopted, nine out of every ten of the suggestions for the "Big Cut," what must be said of the part played by him in what has

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

independent and humorous criticism of the great, and of a sort of lofty detachment, which were to characterise the series from beginning to end.

In the very next instalment I find with some elation that "LAYARD gave it to ministers right and left," and that "it would be egotism in *Mr. Punch* did he applaud sentiments which Mr. LAYARD must have studied in their best form in the pages of his immortal work, but *Mr. Punch* has no objection to say that the earnest eloquence of the member for Nineveh did justice to his theme."

Fortunately, my distinguished kinsman was a great favourite with *Punch*, who admired his independence, and recognised in him one of the few politicians to whom office was the last consideration. Indeed, so impressed was he with his straightforwardness and untiring energy that a full-page cartoon was soon afterwards devoted to "The Member for Nineveh digging out the British Bull" from the slough, into which years of routine, jobbery, patronage, incompetency, muddle and red-tape had plunged him. And when, a few weeks later, the impetuous young man chanced to make a slip on a point of fact in his eager zeal to strip the mask from jobbery, and all the wolves, jackals and poodle-dogs of State were yelping at his heels, *Punch* came to the rescue with the fine cartoon, "Baiting the Nineveh Bull" :—

"Ended the match was, though never a scratch was  
To see on the bull at the close of the fray :  
Cads with huzzaing spent, curs hoarse with baying, went  
Clubwards and kennelwards, glorious, away.

## “ ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT ”

But, though their pack, Sir, the Commons may back, Sir,  
Though of his clap-traps and jokes Pam be full,  
Public opinion asserts its dominion,  
Giving its voice for the Nineveh Bull.”

I mention this in which I am naturally interested, because here we have a typical example of *Punch's* independence, and further, what is directly germane to our subject, one of the earliest examples of the influence which Shirley, the latest recruit, was exercising on *Punch's* councils. He sows the seed in “ The Essence of Parliament,” and almost immediately it blossoms out into the highest pictorial compliment which can be paid in this country to an unofficial Member of Parliament. And so his influence continued to make itself felt through these delightful contributions, until in the last year of his life he wrote, with some weariness yet with not unnatural self-congratulation :—

“ Again began ‘ Essence of Parliament.’ How this has lasted, and everybody tells me it is a most valuable feature in *P.* It is often a great bore, but not always.”

It is impossible in this place to make more than passing allusion to what was neither more nor less than a complete history of Parliament, as set down week by week for twenty years by a man exceptionally equipped for his task, ideally situated for its performance, and abundantly familiar with the customs, procedure and idiosyncrasies of his subject.

“ They were sad times for Merry England when the ‘ Essence ’ was begun,” writes Mr. Silver to me. “ Holy Russia had cried ‘ Havoc ’ and let slip the dogs of war, and the British Bull-dog had been making a bad start. Someone had blundered as someone always

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

will, and the nation's wrath was kindled against an ill-starred Government. Aided by the *Times*, *Mr. Punch* attacked the Ministry, and not many weeks elapsed before 'the People's Premier' succeeded to the place of 'Antiquated Imbecility,' as 'Pam' with tender flattery had called Lord Aberdeen.

"*Tempora mutantur*. Both the *Times* and *Punch* are somewhat changed since then, and possibly their influence is now less strongly felt. In these hurry-scurry days people seldom stop to think. They prefer light, trivial chatter to words of gravity or weight. Whatever 'views' they chance to have upon a subject are mostly mere 'snapshots.' Wise in his generation, *Mr. Punch* goes with the times, and his wisdom is well-known to be unfailing, like his wit. In his 'Essence' now he pays less heed to the speeches than the speakers. What they say is noticed not so much as what they wear and how they look. There is indeed less record of the matter than the manner of debate. But though its style may have been altered, the 'Essence' still exists. It has been yearly carried on for more than half-a-century, and may well survive for a century or two further; unless indeed the Heptarchy return, by a decree of Little Englanders (haply born in civic Little Britain), when the British Parliament may be proclaimed to be extinct.

"Readers often fancy it is quite easy to be writers: and it may seem a little matter to condense a lot of talk. But to write the 'Essence' in the style that Shirley started was not so light a labour as may be supposed. *Crede experto*. At times I was his deputy, and found it was by no means an enviable post.\* To

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\* The following quotation from an unpublished letter written by Shirley to Percival Leigh in Aug., 1860, refers to one of these occasions. "Argentum" was one of Mr. Silver's nicknames.

"About the 'Essence,' I assure you that no such idea as you

## “ ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT ”

stew down half-a-score or more of pages in the *Times* and serve them up with jest-sauce in a single page of *Punch*; to give by way of garnish a *bon mot* from the Lobby; to report with due veracity (and perhaps curtailed verbosity) a sentence worth recording; and to add some apt quotations to enliven dull debates; all this was Shirley's work when Parliament was sitting, and it was done so cheerily and with such surprising skill, that few readers could be conscious of the labour it had cost him, or the cleverness it required.

“ In these days of ‘snappy pars,’ of semi-Yankee ‘journalese,’ Shirley's pure, well-chosen English may seem rather out of date. But I think it may be fairly cited as a model of good writing for the Press. Though chiefly done at a hand-gallop, it showed no sign of haste. There was neither faulty grammar, nor slovenly neglect of style. Plain simple words were chosen to express clear, earnest thoughts; and a screen of showy adjectives was never used to hide a want of sterling knowledge, or of sound substantial sense.”

That is interesting as the opinion of one who was, as little more than a boy, writing for *Punch* ere ever Shirley Brooks had stormed the position, and who now, perhaps with natural prejudice in favour of the past, surveys the arena of his early triumphs without intolerance and with the wisdom that comes of ripe experience.

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allude to ever entered this child's head. Moreover, there was a special reason why Argentum should do it, namely, that he is remunerated by the work, not by salary, and one is only too glad to throw anything to so good a fellow. Besides, when did I ever misunderstand you?”

## CHAPTER VIII

1852-1854—"A Story with a Vengeance"—"Aspen Court"—*Bentley's Miscellany*—Marriage with Miss Emily Walkinshaw—Clubs—Birth of his Sons and their Fate.



FORTUNE was now smiling upon Shirley. His income derived from the *Morning Chronicle*, the *Illustrated London News*, the *Era*, and *Punch*, to mention the important few of the many irons which he now had in the fire, was assuming considerable dimensions, and his reputation in the world of letters was proportionately increasing. His serial in *Punch*, "Miss Violet and her Offers," of which the authorship was not long a secret, suggested at least to one prominent publisher that here was possibly a valuable recruit to the ranks of novelists, not so overcrowded a regiment then as it is at this present writing.

Up to the year 1852 Shirley's name had but once been publicly identified with anything in the shape of fiction, and then only with the unimportant "Story with a Vengeance," in which he had been associated with his friend Angus Reach. Of so little account, indeed, is this volume, that it would call for no further mention were it not that, by a curious chance I have

## “ A STORY WITH A VENGEANCE ”

discovered at what rate the young authors were paid for a work of imagination running to a hundred and twenty-six pretty closely printed pages, and in the event found worthy of several new editions. Turning over the pages of a presentation copy of Shirley's first three-volumed novel, kindly lent me by Mr. Downing, the well-known Birmingham bookseller, I found pasted inside the cover of the third volume the following in Shirley's handwriting addressed to Horace Mayhew :—

“ Horatius Flaccus  
(The lover of Bacchus,  
And maker of *mots*, often dirty),  
The £—s. and d.  
Paid to Angus and me  
Was pounds to the number of THIRTY.

\* \* \* \* \*

That is, you know, £15 each, but this was considered a high price (which I will be hanged if it was), and given for a reason disconnected with the vast merits of the work. I don't know that the matter is anything which is desired to be secret, but still perhaps you will be good enough to keep the information as a guide to yourself, and not to mention it at Ingram's, as we may have other transactions there, and publishers like mystery—*Verbum Sat.*

“ *Semper tuus*

“ S. B. of Egypt.”

At first sight this would seem to have no necessary connection with “ A Story with a Vengeance,” which has no publisher's name on the title-page of the first edition, and is merely described as “ published at 227 Strand.” When, however, we remember that that was



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

the publishing address of Ingram, Cooke & Co., and that this was the only book collaborated in by Shirley and Angus, the train of reasoning is complete, and we feel for the moment the true triumph of the bibliomaniac. Nor do we only thus learn chancewise the kind of prices that Shirley was receiving in his thirty-seventh year, but also that he considered the price very inadequate, as indeed it would appear to be.

But the young author must at first take what he can get, and possess his soul in patience for the time when he has gained reputation enough to speak with his enemy, the publisher, in the gate, and Shirley's moment of triumph was not long in coming. Before the year was out one of the greatest of editor-publishers was knocking at his door.

*Bentley's Miscellany* was now in the heyday of its great career, and Richard Bentley was on the look-out for a likely serial writer. "Miss Violet and her Offers" was attracting much attention in the pages of *Punch*, and Bentley knew what was good when he saw it. Its authorship leaked out, and the publisher made a flattering offer to the newest of *Punch's* recruits. So it came about that Shirley Brooks made his bow as a serious novelist in the pages of the great *Miscellany* which had built up its reputation on the names of Charles Dickens, William Harrison Ainsworth, and others of the mid-Victorian brotherhood.

Dedicated to Charles Dickens when eventually it was published in book form, "Aspen Court" is not without signs of the Master's influence. Written for serial issue, it has the weaknesses that of necessity

## AS NOVELIST

appertain to that method of publication. It suffers from the spasms, a distressing disease not so much because of its violent nature as because of the inevitable periodicity of the attacks. Life has to unfold itself in twenty passionate acts. An interval of so many pages and the thrill is imperative. The thunder-clap comes just when you *most* expect it. There is plenty of story, plenty of incident, plenty of observation, plenty *about* the characters. But the observation is observation in snippets, and the characters never develop. Now and then a good scene presents itself; the conversation proceeds leisurely and effectively. It even works up to a legitimate thrill; but the time is not yet; it is allowed to flicker out because the reader must be kept in suspense lest he should not buy the next number. And yet there is abundant evidence that Shirley had it in him to write a good novel.

The fault, of course, was with the system. The publisher required the writer to work with one eye on the clock. And, like the clock, his work must always strike at the hour. That no doubt was necessary to the production of a good serial. It was fatal to the production of a good novel. And as we read "Aspen Court" now we scarcely care who wins or who loses. Further, I doubt very much whether Shirley himself ever took the fate of the characters in his novels very seriously. Indeed, Mr. Silver has record of a conversation between him and Horace Mayhew which points directly to the contrary:—

"Once," said Shirley, "I began a tale of mystery for a monthly magazine and made 'on horror's head

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

horrors accumulate.' At the close of the fifth chapter, things came to a dead lock. (No, Horace, it had *not* a skeleton key.) And things grew so mysterious that I could make neither head nor tail (tale) of them. So I stopped suddenly and wrote 'To be continued in our next.' But I never found the courage to complete it."

There are no doubt some adventitious interests attaching to "Aspen Court." We have seen Shirley in "The Gordian Knot" enshrining the portrait of his uncle, Charles Sabine. So, here, the London magistrate is a portrait of his friend Gilbert Abbott à Beckett.

Again on page 116, Vol. I, we find mention of certain "fast" young ladies "who have had staircase flirtations . . . have taken a good deal of champagne, and have had 'letters left at the pastry cook's,'" the last words referring, of course, to Horace Mayhew's still readable papers which appeared under that title in *Punch*. And there are other extrinsic matters which amuse us who have made ourselves familiar with literary affairs of the period. But, as a novel, its day is over. Popular enough to be republished as late as 1868, it can now have no further hope of resurrection.

And what is true of "Aspen Court" equally applies, as we shall see, with one exception, to the novels that came after, notwithstanding the weighty dictum of the "Encyclopædia Britannica" that "they possess qualities which will save them from swift oblivion." Which, by the way, is just the sort of prophesy an encyclopædia ought not to make. It necessitates reconsideration and a new edition so quickly!

## MARRIAGE

This new departure was a matter of considerable importance in Shirley's career. Hitherto his name had been only one to conjure with in editors' offices and in purely literary circles. Now it was to become familiar to the reading public. Hitherto he had been paid the price per line or per thousand that his work was worth in the market. Henceforth something extra would have to be paid for the use of his name.

And this was not the only result of his access of fame and fortune. He was now thirty-eight years of age, and he was for the first time in a position to marry. A Spanish proverb tells us that a bachelor is a peacock ; betrothed he is a lion ; wedded he is an ass. If this be true then we must date Shirley's metempsychosis from the bird of gay plumage to the King of the Forest on June 1st, 1853, for on that day he proposed for the hand of Miss Emily Margaret Walkinshaw, and was accepted. She was the daughter of Dr. William Bannatyne Walkinshaw, of Naparima, Trinidad. Brunette to her sister's blonde, the two pretty girls were known in art circles as "Night" and "Morning," and had so been painted by Carl Schiller.

Shirley through life was frankly susceptible to the charms of a pretty face, and had to pay the price of his susceptibility. Not that his marriage proved other than satisfactory, as marriages go, but it was scarcely the ideal union. There was little of that intellectual sympathy which increases with age. To Mrs. Brooks her husband's work, after the first blush of the thing had worn off, was just a money-making affair, and so far of importance. But in its wider

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

aspect it made little or no appeal to her, save where it brought in its train free tickets for the theatre-going which was her passion, and those social invitations which choke the letter-box of the literary celebrity.

Twenty years later, I find him writing rather bitterly in his diary :—

“ E. described literature as a ‘ rotten stick.’ . . . We have not found it so rotten, I think, yet. Nor will it be, while my health endures, please God. And that failing, any vocation would be rotten, unless it had enabled one to save.”

That is the protest of the man of letters against a slight passed upon what, in his eyes, was something more than a trade—something the value of which was not merely to be gauged by pounds, shillings, and pence. I do not wish to lay too much stress upon this, nor to put all the blame on Mrs. Brooks’s shoulders for the lack of spontaneous sympathy which marked their married life. I say “ spontaneous sympathy,” for Shirley was instant, as we shall see, in trying to invent a workable substitute.

It may be, too, that Shirley early aroused in his wife the jealousy which is so easily excited in some gentle breasts, and kills the seed of true sympathy which should grow and grow until it becomes the very flower of life. Indeed, he once confessed to Mr. Silver that soon after the honeymoon his wife scolded him for peeping into pretty bonnets, while he walked with her, and that he only a little pacified her by the suddenly invented excuse—“ My dear, I was only

## MRS. SHIRLEY BROOKS

looking to see if I could find a prettier face than yours, and I really cannot."

One day somebody was chaffing Mrs. Brooks on this score, when she exclaimed, "Shirley, O Shirley! I would trust him in a nunnery"; but that may have meant anything. A good many women simulate indifference when touched on the raw.

Mrs. Brooks, though technically a Creole, was Irish, and very proud of the fact. She also had the superstitions of her race. Mrs. Panton tells me that the Christmas before she died—she survived her husband for six years—she dined with Mr. and Mrs. Frith. There were thirteen at table, and no "Man from Blankley's!" Mrs. Frith got up first, saying, "I will be the first, because I can best be spared." Immediately up jumped "Shirlina," as Mrs. Brooks was nicknamed in their circle, crying, "Well, I'll be the second, for if you died, dear Mrs. Frith, I shouldn't want to live." A month later Mrs. Frith was dead, and five months later Mrs. Brooks!

Shirley was sixteen years older than his wife, and seems to have expressed the position before their marriage in "Horace for the Ladies":—

"O Lilian dear, you're just eighteen,  
And I am nearly forty-three:  
But that's no reason, little queen,  
That you should seem so shy of me.

"Whene'er I come you run away,  
Just like a timid, foolish fawn;  
Rush to the instrument to play,  
Or join the children on the lawn.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

" I'm not a tiger, fawn, you know,  
Although a Lion in saloons ;  
Why run from me with such a show  
Of love for brats, and birds, and tunes ?

" Come : add eighteen to forty-three,  
That's only sixty-one between us ;  
My wife I've vowed that you shall be,  
So take this ring, my little Venus."

Later on he found that sympathetic intelligence was lacking, and Molière tells us that

. . . " l'âge ne sert de guère,  
Quand on n'a pas cela."

That no doubt drove him in the early years of his married life to the clubs, which he loved, and that made him not so disconsolate a grass-widower as he might have been, when he had his house to himself, and London all round it. For Shirley was as essentially a London man as was Dr. Johnson. On the rare occasions when, on strong compulsion, he accompanied his wife and sons on holiday trips, he would soon grow restless and chafe until he could get back to his own house in Regent's Park, to his morning papers, his voluminous correspondence, his own armchair and his familiar books—all set in his own methodical way and not to be touched by strange hands on any account. Then he was happy. He had the house to himself for his work, and, what was more, he was within reach of his beloved Fleet Street, the " Bedford " (his favourite hotel under the piazzas of Covent Garden), and the " Garrick," " Fielding," or " Our " Clubs. Thither he would walk, happier in the movement of the streets than in the loveliest of Nature's unspoiled scenery, eager

## AS FATHER

for a plain dinner, a glass of punch and a good chat with Mark Lemon and other of his Bohemian friends.

In October, 1854, Mrs. Brooks presented her husband with the first of their two sons, and Shirley accepted his paternal responsibilities with due seriousness. As Mr. Frith writes of him when his sons were growing up, "If ever father 'garnered up hopes' in his children, Shirley Brooks was the man." He held advanced ideas on the subject of education, and determined that they should have of the very best. With this idea he took an active interest in the formation of the now defunct "International College" at Isleworth, investing and losing in the scheme a considerable sum of money. That was to be the starting point, and from thence the boys were to go to Germany, then to France, and so get a non-insular all-round education.

In the case of his eldest son, Reginald, this scheme was adhered to, with what seemed at first good results, for the boy showed brilliant promise. Later on he entered Owens College, Manchester, and Shirley wrote in his diary :—

"God bless him, may this be the crowning of his education, which we may say we have spared nothing to make effective."

But the promise of a brilliant and distinguished career was not to be fulfilled. Fortunately for Shirley he did not live to receive the blow which would have fallen upon him with staggering effect.

For six years after his death, and so long as Mrs. Brooks lived, things went well enough with the boy. In 1880 he was doing some work for *Punch*. "The



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

following year," writes Mr. Spielmann, "he was called to the Table, and remained there without much distinction until 1884. He wrote some smart papers, but his groove was not that of the sober and respectable Fleet Street sage. He preferred wilder spirits and accordingly retired."

Then he blossomed into "Blobbs" of the *Sporting Times*, and his fate was sealed. Those were the days when certain "smart" drinking bars in London stood free to that poisonous group of dissipated *flaneurs* who posed as the latest expression of sporting journalism, and simulated every vice which they did not practise. "About this time," writes one of his acquaintances, "he fell madly in love with a well-known actress, who is now a peeress, and tried to shoot himself, but failing, was not too overcome to give a laughable account of it to his friends!" That is, in little, the record of a wasted life. The end was certain, and, like many another of his colleagues, he went under and died.

The history of the younger boy was no less tragic, and the only satisfaction in the whole wretched business was that the passionately devoted father did not live long enough to see his fondest hopes dashed to the ground. What might have been their fate, had their father lived, who can say? Possibly we might have been spared the spectacle of two more failures. But they went out into the world to learn by experience. The teacher's school-fees proved too heavy, and there was no one by to help them pay.

## CHAPTER IX

1853-1856—The Crimea—"Dagon"—Percival Leigh—Horace Mayhew—"The Gordian Knot"—Generous Help from Messrs. Bradbury & Evans—Story of Spurgeon—"Poem by a Perfectly Furious Academician"—The Deceased Wife's Sister—An Armed Passage with Richard Bentley—Mr. W. P. Frith—"Cottle."



IN the last chapter I have, with the object of clearing the ground for the consecutive narrative, somewhat anticipated events. The story shall henceforward be allowed to unfold itself step by step, and as far as possible by means of letters and diaries.

Shirley had now a wife, and ways and means had to be considered. He had a good many irons in the fire, but it was *Punch* who was gradually coming to be his principal paymaster. At first he received the usual outsider's fee of a guinea a column. Now, towards the close of 1853, he was promoted, as a member of the staff, to five guineas a week.

A letter of this period to one of the proprietors suggests that his domestic responsibilities may have been for the moment a little too much for his purse.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

S. B. TO F. M. EVANS.

" 12 NEW INN,  
" Oct. 3rd, 1853.

" MY DEAR EVANS,

" Will you have the kindness to perpetrate in my favour one of those deeds which you last committed for me between three and four months ago, *videlicet*, the drawing a cheque for twenty pounds for me. I need not add that I make the request with the sanction and I may add under the distinguished patronage of St. Mark of the Lemons.

" Believe me, my dear Evans,  
" Yours ever faithfully,  
" SHIRLEY BROOKS."

This letter, it will be noticed, is addressed from 12 New Inn, where he had chambers for the first few years of his life as a Benedict. By 1860 he and his wife were living at 22 Brompton Square, and in 1861 were installed in their final home at 6 Kent Terrace, Regent's Park.

The following letter is eloquent of the general condemnation of the conduct of Ministers and the incapacity of our commanders in the Crimea. The Emperor Nicholas was at this time *Punch's* chief bugbear, but "General Février" was soon to turn traitor and to give Leech the opportunity of rising to the highest pitch of imagination, though by no means the highest pitch of artistic excellence, to which he ever attained.

"Received by most with wild enthusiasm," says Mr. Spielmann, "by others with condemnation as a

## “ DAGON ”

cruel use of a cruel fate, it (the cartoon) none the less electrified the country.” That is true, but I am inclined to think that the minority were the sober-minded ones, and that they were more in accord with the spirit of Shirley’s verses, entitled “ Dagon,” which appeared in the same issue. Here is the first stanza :—

### “ DAGON.”

“ Smitten—as by lightning—smitten  
Down amid his armed array ;  
With the fiery scroll scarce written  
Bidding myriads to the fray ;  
There—but yesterday defying  
Europe’s banners, linked and flying  
For her freedom—see him lying—  
Earth’s Colossus—earth’s own clay.  
But no triumph-shout be given,  
Knee to earth and eye to heaven !  
God hath judged the day.”

S. B. TO PERCIVAL LEIGH.

“ 12 NEW INN,

“ *New Year’s Eve*, 1854,

“ 11 a.m.

“ MY DEAR PROFESSOR,

“ ‘ A few gents meeting at Clunn’s ’ last night remembered you ‘ in their cups ’ (elegant for brandy-anwar), and some of them swore to write and wish you a happy new year. Then some of them went to the pit of the Opimlic\* theatre, and lost one another. Whether the vow will be remembered in more quarters than one will be seen, but here is *my* discharge thereof. I hope that you have been, are, and will be exceeding jolly, and that, when the revel is ended, we shall see you renewed like an eagle, the sun, a giant (or any

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\* Another of Shirley’s dreadful inversions.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

other Oriental simile) to wop Nicholas, etc., etc. Now I do earnestly wish you a very happy new year, my dear Professor.

"Of course there is nothing else to say. I never in all my long, useless and evil life knew society so hideously dull. Nobody never tells you nothing, except anecdotes illustrative of the neglect of the Government about the Army. It is rumoured that positive orders have been sent to Lord Raggy to dash at Sebastopol *coûte que coûte*, but I don't believe it, though I do not think, if he did, people would be displeased. But we are like a man who has had rude health all his life, and suddenly feels illness, and bears it abominably—forty years' peace has made us bad war patients.

"A spangled officer told us the other day that in the Army they call the Crimea 'Aberdeen's General Cemetery.'

" . . . We were to have had *white* soup on Wednesday last, and didn't, Pater Evans not remembering to order it. For the which the judgment of Heaven hath speedily descended upon him, his landlord having given him offensive notice to quit. Such are the consequences of crime, beware thereof.

Is Scamp\* with you? If so give him a bone for me.

"I am, my dear fellow,

"Ever yours,

"SHIRLEY BROOKS."

The next letter in order of date I find pasted into a copy of "Aspen Court," which Shirley presented later on in this year to Horace Mayhew. But why "Ponny," who was no artist, should be called upon to sign the Art Union Plate is to me an insoluble mystery.

---

\* Leigh's dog.

“ PONNY ”

S. B. TO HORACE MAYHEW.

(Date on post-mark, April 25th, 1855.)

“ Thursday.

“ VENERATED MAN,

“ Three minutes after sight take a piece of paper— a strip (I should say) not more than an inch-and-a-half wide and six inches long.

“ Have you done that ?

“ Very well.

“ Then write *lengthways* (the way you always write your notes, by the way, and a heathenish way it is) any words with which genius may inspire you to the effect that *you* give *me*—what ?

“ What ? Why, the Beautiful Plate of the Art Union to be sure. I saw it at the office just now, and bought it in a phrenzy, have kicked a *church* out of a frame to make room for it, and it hangs already over my chimbley. But I like an autograph to complete it. Send it us, that’s a good fellow, and I will go and applaud your pantomime at the Olympic again, and also your opera at the Albert Saloon, besides reading your contributions to the *Family Herald*.

“ Ever yours faithfully,

“ SHIRLEY BROOKS.

“ Horace Mayhew, Esq.”

Two days later he wrote thanking Mr. Evans for further advances. “ The book ” referred to is, of course, “ Aspen Court,” which had been running serially and was now being revised for publication in volume form.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

S. B. TO F. M. EVANS.

"April 27th, 1855.

"MY DEAR EVANS,

"Thanks—many of them. I feel like a *post mortem* capitalist.

"From to-morrow morning until the book is in the printer's hands I shut myself up working there. Should you see Bentley, this assurance will probably satisfy him. I shall look at nothing till the work is out.

"Ever yours faithfully,

"SHIRLEY BROOKS.

"F. M. Evans, Esq."

The next letter, which as a matter of fact was never sent, is eloquent of Shirley's growing confidence in his position as a writer and of his intention to assert his independence. Fortunately perhaps, he submitted it to "Pater" Evans, who counselled a less bellicose tone. Otherwise it is not improbable that "The Gordian Knot," his next novel, would have had to seek another publisher.

S. B. TO RICHARD BENTLEY.

"12 NEW INN,

"Aug. 5th, 1855.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I am favoured with your note of the 3rd and immediately reply, although your misconception of the idea I had, as to bringing out a new book, seems to render it improbable that our communication would result in business. I made no "proposal," but intimated to our common friend, Mr. Evans, that certain terms could be arranged, I should prefer my next novel to proceed from your house to bring it out "elsewhere"—meaning a quarter when

## A BREEZE WITH BENTLEY

a proposal—one among several—has been made to me.

“You propose that I should write the book, and, ‘when complete,’ let you ‘see it’ that you ‘may take it into consideration.’

“Our two views of my position as an author are so essentially diverse, that it is scarcely worth while to remark upon your proposing to me exactly what you would, *properly*, propose to a writer who had never published a line, and who came to request you to bring out his first book.

“I may, therefore, I presume, receive your note as one which disposes of the consideration that induced me to desire that the house which had brought out my first novel, with, I understand, so much financial success, and with, I read, so much general approbation, should produce the next.

“With best regards, believe me,

“My dear Sir,

“Yours very truly,

“SHIRLEY BROOKS.”

S. B. TO F. M. EVANS.

“12 NEW INN,

“*Saturday night.*”

“MY DEAR PATER,

“I have had the enclosed from Bentley. It is either a bit of his habitual ignorance, or else impertinence—it don’t much matter which. I have written a reply which I should like you to read, and either forward, or suppress it, as you may think most proper. I shall be away till Wednesday, but up to meet you at Thackeray’s.

“Ever yours faithfully,

“S. B.”

Eventually Shirley’s ruffled feelings were smoothed down, and he undertook a second serial for Bentley.



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

In this, as events proved, he was undertaking more than he could easily perform. Engaged as he was at that time in ever-increasing newspaper work of arduous nature, he, in his own rather turgid words, "under-estimated the difficulty of suddenly turning from the exciting duties and pleasures of journalism to the lines upon which a writer who aspires to be an artist lays down a work of extended character." As time went on he found it harder and harder to turn from active and polemic press-work to the spinning of a consecutive and sustained work of fiction. At the top of it all came domestic trouble, with the result that a considerable interval elapsed between two of the instalments into which the tale was necessarily divided. This naturally disturbed Mr. Bentley, who threatened legal proceedings. Fortunately Charles Dickens came to the rescue, and the threat was not carried into execution. Eventually "The Gordian Knot" was finished. But the twelve numbers spread themselves over twice as many months, to the annoyance of the expectant public and the detriment of the sales of the magazine. When, however, it had received careful revision and appeared in book form in 1860 it obtained considerable success, and was held worthy of dedication to his beloved chief and his wife, friends for whom he always retained the deepest regard.

TO MARK AND HELEN LEMON.

"MY DEAR FRIENDS,

"I have strong claims to the right of inscribing this book with your names. Years back, a pleasant and valuable literary connexion with one of your

## " THE GORDIAN KNOT "

originated a cordial friendship with both ; and, if I am happy to say that I see no prospect of a termination of the first, I am still happier to believe in the impossibility of an interruption of the second.

" Then, if I add that a large, and to me the most agreeable portion of this volume, was composed in the quiet and delightful Sussex retreat which you have chosen, and while I was enjoying the kindest hospitalities of your household, I think that I have made out my claim to sign myself, in this public manner,

" Your obliged and attached Friend,

" SHIRLEY BROOKS.

" *The Temple.*"

The book owed much of its success to the illustrations by John Tenniel, and the *Illustrated London News* paid the great *Punch* artist the very unusual compliment of specially engraving on wood one of the etched designs for the purpose of illustrating their review of the volumes. Apparently, too, they found much to admire in Shirley's share of the work, for they wrote, " We would strongly recommend Mr. Brooks as a model to many of the literary aspirants of the day who are either infected with Carlyle or Ruskinism." But this after all may have been merely the hyperbole of log-rolling on behalf of one of their own regular contributors.

About this time Spurgeon had come up to London, and Exeter Hall was bursting with his immense audiences. Stories, true and apocryphal, were rife. Here is one which Shirley had picked up and dispatched to Percival Leigh.

" I requite your story with another, but I regret to

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

say a harmless one. Spurgeon was travelling in a railway carriage. Ladies therein. To them he did not speak. But at last, coming through Kelvedon, he pointed at it, and said with a fat smile, 'There the celebrated Spurgeon was born.' Instantly answered him a wiry, blue-stocking sort of woman, who had recognized him, 'Had Paul been travelling on the railway passing through Tarsus, *he* would have said "There the chief of sinners was born."' The Baptist was shut up, as now shall be this letter, for I am summoned to a roast 'fessant.'"

*Punch* laughed good-humouredly at the young evangelist's glowing periods and hell-fire threatenings, and "calculated that on an average the reverend teacher uses in every sermon no less than three tons of coal, and all red-hot." But Spurgeon had a good sense of humour too, and is said to have treasured up all the cartoons and caricatures that sought to turn him into ridicule.

*Punch* got a good deal of fun out of the "Pre-Raphaelite" movement, and Shirley in 1856 contributed to the controversy the celebrated "Poem by a perfectly furious Academician," which is always worth repeating.

"I takes and paints,  
Hears no complaints,  
And sells before I'm dry;  
Till savage Ruskin  
He sticks his tusk in,  
Then nobody will buy.

"N.B.—Confound Ruskin—only that will not come into the poetry—but it's true."

...

## DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER

This same year he plumped for "The Deceased Wife's Sister's Bill," which the Commons had passed but to which the Lords were hostile :—

" You wrote my letters, you paid my bills,  
And took receipts (which you never lost),  
I smoked, you twisted the nicest spills,  
And you always knew what the coals had cost.  
You saw that my slippers were near my chair,  
You saw that my study fire would draw,  
And you did it all with a cheerful air,  
(Not that of a Martyr), my Sister-in-law."

The reasons it must be admitted were of the flimsiest, but to the average man, who was not a theologian, they seemed sufficient. Fifteen years later when he was reading Miss Muloch's book written to the same end he entered in his diary :—

" Finished 'Hannah.' It is a pretty sermon to inculcate the propriety of taking your wife's sister abroad, marrying her there, and settling there till the law be altered."

Shirley was now hard at work on his novel, "The Gordian Knot," but novels have an awkward way of not getting paid for until the manuscript is in the hands of the publisher. And Shirley's late passage with Bentley made it difficult to go down on his knees for an advance from that quarter. For his own and his wife's current needs his income was fully sufficient, but he had outrun the constable in setting up his household gods, and there were other unexpected calls crowding in upon him. His father was old, ill, and past his work, and his sister, who had been long

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

ailing, was now too ill to be left alone. Shirley was the only member of the family in a position to help, and again he was forced to throw himself on the mercy of the ever-generous proprietors of *Punch*.

S. B. TO MESSRS. BRADBURY AND EVANS.

“ 12 NEW INN,

“ 17th November, 1856.

“ MY DEAR FRIENDS, BRADBURY AND EVANS,

“ I have a favour to ask at your hands. Let me state the circumstances as briefly as I can.

“ My hands are very full of well-paid business, but my giving to it the full energy and attention which it requires has been grievously interfered with, during the last three months, by family afflictions of a very disturbing character. The serious illness of my father has been one of these, but a greater has been, I deplore to say, the (illness) of my sister, whose condition has rendered my days and even nights perfectly unsettled and miserable. It has been with much difficulty that I have been enabled to meet the various *regular* literary demands on me—the work of definite dates. Other work has been sadly postponed, for there is no need to tell you that intellectual labour can only be got out of something like a tranquil mind.

“ The next consequence has been that certain pecuniary troubles, of no great amount, but harassing, have been added to my vexations, and increase my hindrances. Could I remove the more pressing of these, I could go to work with full force, and do myself and others more justice.

“ I have tried to *explain* myself as succinctly as I could. I feel anxious to put my *request* with more circumlocution, and yet I should be thereby doing an

## GENEROSITY OF BRADBURY & EVANS

injustice to the spirit of friendship in which you will receive—however you decide upon—my request.

“On delivery of my novel to Mr. Bentley, there will be £100 for me to receive. I would ask you, not for actual coin, but to oblige me with your acceptance, in 3 months, for the above amount, and I would also give you such authority as would prevent Mr. Bentley from handing the money over, except to yourselves. Thus, if my mind were at ease, and I could work, the book would be complete, and the money at your disposal *before* the acceptance was due. I do not know whether this is exactly a business-like proposal, but it seems safe, if you have confidence in my brains and health—I know you have in my intentions.

“I think I will say no more, except that I ask this with the reluctance one feels to trespass upon kindness, but I know that you will at once understand the whole case as completely as possible, and then I leave the matter for your consideration, simply adding that *no* result can increase or diminish the earnest regard with which I remain,

“Dear ‘B. and E.,’

“Yours most faithfully,

“SHIRLEY BROOKS.”

As before, Messrs. Bradbury and Evans gave the help that was asked for, and Shirley wrote :—

S. B. TO MESSRS. BRADBURY & EVANS.

“12 NEW INN,

“Nov. 28<sup>th</sup>, 1856.

‘MY DEAR B. & E.,

“One word more of sincerest thanks for your kindness, which has much relieved my mind.

“I will call at Whitefriars to-morrow about mid-day.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

In the meantime I enclose a bill which I hope, unlike Crabbe's,

“ *Is drawn with true mercantile skill,*”

and a sort of note to Bentley which will, I presume, answer the purpose of a *distringas*.

“ Believe me, my dear B. & E.,

“ Yours most faithfully

“ and obliged,

“ S. B.”

It was about this time that the Brookses first met Mr. Frith, the distinguished Royal Academician, at a dinner at John Leech's, and thus began a friendship which lasted as long as life. Writing of that meeting in his delightful “ *Reminiscences*,”\* Mr. Frith says :—

“ I then became aware how well Brooks deserved to be called ‘ good company.’ He had long been on the staff of *Punch*, under the leadership of Mark Lemon, and nearly every week that paper owed some of its smartest writing to the pen of Shirley Brooks. But it was in conversation, and above all in his letters, that his wit and humour were brilliantly conspicuous.”

As we proceed we shall constantly catch glimpses of delightful passages between these two remarkable men. One standing joke between them came to be that Shirley fathered upon his friend any particularly outrageous communication that might be from time to time thrust into the *Punch* letter-box. It was one of these communications which secured for Mr. Frith the nickname of “ Cottle.” Here is the distinguished artist's amusing account of the circumstance :—

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\* The many valuable quotations from the *Reminiscences* which follow are made with the kind permission of Messrs. Macmillan & Co.

## “ COTTLE ”

“ A certain Elizabeth Cottle sent to *Punch* a wild document—plentifully interspersed with religious quotations—in which she proved to her own satisfaction that if she had her rights she would be Queen of England. She traced her descent in the clearest way from Henry VIII, who had a lawful wife unknown to history—a Lady Elizabeth Cottle, or Cottal, daughter of a knight of that name who had saved Henry’s life at the Battle of Armageddon. An angel appeared on the occasion, and placed upon the knight’s head a crown of gold, thereby greatly astonishing all the British army. According to Elizabeth, the heavenly visitor stayed long enough to tell the English monarch that—in return for the important service rendered by the valiant knight—he must immediately take to wife the beautiful daughter of his preserver. The wife in possession was removed by simply taking off her head, and the Lady Cottle became Mrs. Henry, and from that secret marriage Mrs. Elizabeth Cottle undertook to show, in the pages of *Punch*, that she was descended in what she called ‘a straight line’; offering great numbers of quotations from Holy Writ in proof of her case.

“ This interesting descendant from a long line of kings lived at Putney, a locality—as she threateningly put it—soon to be exchanged for Buckingham Palace.

“ The above, to the best of my recollection, is a fair summary of the Cottle manifesto; the original—which Brooks sent me, with an inimitably funny note affecting to believe me to be the author—I regret to say, has been lost.

“ In spite of my denial of any knowledge of Mrs. or Miss Cottle, I became Cottle in Shirley’s eyes, and he frequently addressed me accordingly.”

I have said that, despite the fact that Shirley’s



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

pen was for ever in his hand, he was never too tired to put it to work again to dash off a joke which he wished to share with a friend. Here is a typical note of the kind, written to Mr. Frith a few years later, which also proves incidentally that Shirley was no great authority on German pronunciation.

S. B. TO MR. FRITH.

" MY DEAR COTTLE,

" I present you with our work

' ON THE EMINENT TELEGRAPHIST (BARON REUTER)

' England believes his telegrams,  
Whether they please or fright her ;  
Other electric sparks are right,  
But he is always " *righter*."

That forces the most ignorant to sound the name right. Such is genius! . . . A man had been bankrupt eight times, each time paying two shillings and sixpence in the pound. He then declared that as eight half-crowns made a sovereign, he had paid twenty shillings in the pound. . . . Is not this a neat way of calling a man a liar? It was a witness who contradicted the last witness. Being asked to explain how the latter could have said what he did, he pleasingly remarked, ' That Mr. ——'s mind was so unfortunately constituted that he was unable to recognise the harmony that should exist between words and facts.'

" I shall adopt this formula.

" Unaware that I have other matter for your honour's attention,

" I remain, with befitting respect,

" Yours grumpily,

" PLANTAGENET BROOKS."

## “ SHEGOG ”

Here also is “The Epistle of Shegog,” written by Shirley to Mr. Frith, which I have permission to quote from the “Reminiscences.” It is certainly very frivolous and perhaps undignified, but it must be remembered in extenuation that it was written for private consumption.

### “ CHAPTER I

“ Now the word of Cottle came unto me, even me, Shegog, saying, Come, and eat flesh, and drink wine, which maketh glad the heart of man, and impertinent the tongue of woman. Then I took counsel of myself, and said, The man, even Cottle, is a good man, and an affable ; moreover his harem hath found favour in mine eyes, and his child is comely. And I arose and went unto my wife, which came from the island that is beyond the western sea, and I said unto her, Lo ! And she replied, Is thy servant a cow that she should do this thing ? And again I said unto her, Lo ! (*P'eau ?* W. P. F.) And she answered, saying, It is in the glass jug on the sideboard. And I said unto her the third time, Lo ! And she answered, saying, Low, dear boy, who is low ? Then did my wrath blaze out like the fire when it consumeth thorns, and I said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. Have I not told thee three times to look at this letter, even this scroll, which is written by the man Cottle, which useth pigments, and maketh the faces of the princes of the people, and the chief lords thereof ? Likewise the highway robber, the man Claude Duval, and the little child which showeth her fat little legs to the sea, even the Ramsgate sea. Then the woman which is of the western islands answered, saying, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian ; nevertheless, give me the letter. And I spread the letter before the woman.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

### “ CHAPTER II

“ Now when she had read the letter, which was written in a strange tongue, like unto that of Cerberus, the dog of hell, for it was three tongues, and all of them — bad, I said unto her, Cheer up. Art thou not my wife ? And she answered, saying, Even so, wus luck ; but that is not the matter. Didst thou not say unto them that dwell by Clapham (where, also, the Quakers dwell) that thou wouldst eat flesh and drink wine with them on the Sabbath day, even the fourth Sabbath in the season which is called Lent, because it is borrowed from the woman in scarlet ? And did I not beseech thee, saying, Bind not thyself unto these, for if thou dost, assuredly there will come unto thee that which is better ? And she turned and went away in a rage.

### “ CHAPTER III

“ THEN I, even I, Shegog, went into my own place. And I drew forth a weed, even a roll of the plant that cometh from the West, and I burned the weed before the brazen image which Punchikadnezzar the king had set up. And peace flowed into my mind, and righteousness came in upon my soul. Nevertheless, I tarried certain time, for I said, Who am I, that I should be blowed up by the wife of my bosom ? But when the burnt sacrifice had been fully offered, I went forth and called, saying in a loud voice, Hi ! Hi !

### “ CHAPTER IV

“ AND a voice came unto me, yea, a pleasant voice, and it answered, saying, But now thou saidest, Lo ! Which is it, I pray thee, tell me truly, for am I not thy wife, and one of a thousand ? And I said unto myself, but meekly, I would altogether that thou wert ; howbeit, I have but one. Then I said unto her, Is all serene ?

## MR. FRITH

and she said, All is serene. Nevertheless, I am sorry for the word which thou gavest unto them which dwell by Clapham. Then I answered, saying, Verily, the wind bloweth where it listeth, and Shegog dineth where he liketh. And I wunk a wink at her. Then I said, I will write a lying epistle unto them which dwell at Clapham, and will tell them a lie, even a — lie, and we will go unto the man Cottle, and unto his wife, which is deservedly called Belle, and unto his pleasant child, and we will eat flesh, and our souls shall bless him. And she said, Die in peace, for we will dine with the man Cottle.”

There are other delightful letters from Shirley to Mr. Frith published in the “Reminiscences,”\* to which I would refer my readers.

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\* “My Autobiography and Reminiscences,” by William Powell Frith, R.A. 1887-8.

## CHAPTER X

1857-1860—Tennyson's Bust and Trinity College, Cambridge—"The British Lion's Vengeance on the Bengal Tiger"—"Amusing Poetry"—Death of Douglas Jerrold—John Con-  
Jeaffreson—Birth of Cecil Brooks—Autograph Hunters—  
Shirley's Bust in the Academy—*Once a Week*—Napoleon  
III as the "French Porcupine"—Death of Macaulay—  
Percival Leigh—Spiritualism—Shirley as Lecturer—The  
Volunteer Association—"The Silver Cord"—His Short  
comings as Novelist—Thackeray—Miss Annie Thackeray  
(Mrs. Ritchie).



EW works of art executed in the year 1857 attracted more attention than the bust of Tennyson by Thomas Woolne. Two years later it was presented to Trinity College, Cambridge but was excluded by the authorities from the library on the plea that there was no precedent for paying the honour of inclusion to a living person.

This gave *Punch*, at the hands of Shirley Brook, the opportunity of publishing one of the best parodies of the poet's style ever written. I have not space for more than a part. The whole may be found in that issue for Nov. 12th, 1859.

## TENNYSON

### "THE LAUREATE'S BUST AT TRINITY.

(A Fragment of an Idyll.)

"So that stately bust abode  
For many a month, unseen, among the Dons.  
\* \* \* \* \*

. . . 'for,' said one,  
'It is too soon,' and when they heard the phrase,  
Others caught up the cue, and chorussed it.  
Until, the poet echoing 'Soon? too soon?'  
As if in wrath, WHEWELL looked up and said:—  
'O Laureate, if indeed you list to try,  
Try and unfix our purpose in this thing.'  
Whereat full shrilly sang th' excluded bard—

"'Soon, soon, so soon! Whewell looks stern and chill,  
Soon, soon, so soon! but I can enter still.'  
'Too soon, too soon! You cannot enter now.'

"'I am not dead: of that I do repent,  
But to my living prayer, oh, now relent':  
'Too soon, too soon! You cannot enter now.'

"'Honour in life is sweet: my fame is wide,  
Let me to stand at Dryden's, Byron's side.'  
'Too soon, too soon! You cannot enter now.'

"'Honour that comes in life is rare and sweet:  
I cannot taste it long, for life is fleet.'  
'No, no, too soon! You cannot enter now.'

"So sang the Laureate, while all stonily,  
Their chins upon their hands, as men that had  
No entrails to be moved, sat the stern Dons."

The fact was that there was a suspicion amongst a  
ction of the Fellows that Tennyson's final reputation  
as not sufficiently assured. Therefore for the time  
eing it was placed in the vestibule of the library.  
ater on, when his position seemed irrevocably secure,  
was removed into the Library proper. This was

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

done in the poet's lifetime, which goes to prove that the original plea, that he was not yet dead, was hardly sincere.

The year 1857 was marked by one of those contributions which, as in the case of Jerrold's "Mrs. Caudle," and Thackeray's "Snobs," and "Jeames's Diary," suddenly brought about an increase in *Mr. Punch's* circulation. The chief merit of one of the finest cartoons that ever appeared in these pages of course lies with Sir John Tenniel, but the idea of "The British Lion's Vengeance on the Bengal Tiger" originated with Shirley Brooks. It is, and will remain, one of the great political cartoons of the world. Instinct with the fiercest passion and indignation, it yet perhaps stirs us more by its sublimity and pathos. The Indian Mutiny, the massacre at Delhi, the siege and the terrible and just retribution taken by Colonel Neill, the relief of Lucknow by Colin Campbell, the unspeakable horrors of Cawnpore are all matters of history. Who can ever forget the awful description of the last by one of the officers ?

"I was directed," he wrote, "to the house where all the poor miserable ladies had been murdered. . . . The place was one mass of blood. I am not exaggerating when I tell you that the soles of my boots were more than covered with the blood of these poor wretched creatures. Portions of their dresses, collars, children's socks and ladies' round hats lay about saturated with their blood; and in the sword cuts on the wooden pillars of the room long dark hair was carried by the edge of the weapon. . . . Their bodies were afterwards dragged out and thrown down a well outside

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THE BRITISH LION'S



THE BENGAL TIGER



## “ AMUSING POETRY ”

the building where their limbs were to be seen sticking out in a mass of gory confusion.”

All that, and how much more, was in the minds of the *Punch* men and the country. And no one ever more successfully focussed public opinion than did John Tenniel on those two immortal pages.

This year Shirley edited for Messrs. Lambert & Co. a pretty little volume of “ Amusing Poetry,” which eventually ran into several editions. From the preface we learn that the book did not merely represent his personal choice, but also reflected “ the minds of a considerable number of suggestive and co-operative friends.” The only point upon which he felt any difficulty in defending the selection was that it contained three contributions by himself. But he dismissed criticism by resting his defence on the score that here were only three, and by quoting a good story :—

“ I remember,” he says, “ the story of a gentleman who discovered that his housekeeper had for a long time been cheating him in her summing up of the tradesmen’s bills. She had turned every 0 into 6, by adding a tail. He duly stormed, and threatened her with the Old Bailey, but was mollified by her plea that she could just as easily have changed the cipher into 9, it would only have been the turning the tail the other way ! ”

Shirley’s three contributions were : “ The Philosopher and her Father,” p. 3 ; “ Christmas in War-Time ” (1854), p. 56 ; and “ A Vision of the Crystal Palace ” (June 10th, 1854), p. 217.

This year Shirley, with all the other *Punch* men, stood at the graveside of Douglas Jerrold. Long ago

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

the older man had forgiven the younger for his rather bitter attack in the *Man in the Moon*, beginning "I hate the humbug of the 'wrongs of the poor man' style of writing," and Shirley was not least dear of those to whom he sent his dying message, "Tell the dear boys that if I've ever wounded any of them, I've always loved them."

Twelve years later Shirley saw in the paper the death of the doctor who had attended Jerrold at the last, and noted: "This is the man whose non-comprehension was thought, rightly or wrongly, to have lost us that friend. His name recalls the sad day when I went up to see D. J., June 8th, 1857, not knowing of his illness, and found him dying. I never liked —. I thought him bumptious and a pretender, but I knew too little of him to be certain. I (once) obliged him with some verses. . . . He never obliged me."

The verses referred to were written for a large gathering at Clunn's Hotel on April 25th, 1863, when Thackeray presided at the Shakespeare dinner of "Our Club," of which the doctor was a member. An account of this, probably the last *grand* dinner over which Thackeray presided, is to be found in J. C. Jeaffreson's "Book of Recollections." The verses are feeble and not worth preserving. Thackeray was supported on his right hand by Shirley, and, according to Jeaffreson, who hated him, took part in a little scene at the close of the festivity. Thackeray, he says, believed him (Jeaffreson) to be the author of an adverse criticism of "The Story of Elizabeth," written by Thackeray's elder daughter. In this Thackeray was

## AUTOGRAPH-HUNTERS

wrong, but (I quote Jeaffreson's own words), "as he passed out of the room, with Shirley Brooks at his elbow, (he) bowed slightly and stiffly to me, whilst Shirley Brooks regarded me with a look of exultation!" Readers of Jeaffreson's querulous and pawky book will wonder whether this was not all imagination on the part of one whose self-importance was for ever discovering meaning in the least significant of actions. If Thackeray was angry, why did he bow at all? and did Shirley really express all that Jeaffreson says he did by one passing look?

In August of this year Shirley's second son, Cecil, was born, and in September he paid his first visit to the Lemons at their house at Crawley, where he was ever after one of the most welcome of guests.

Shirley was now a sufficiently imposing figure in the literary world to attract the attention of the autograph hunters. In a characteristic note of an earlier date, pasted in the before-mentioned presentation copy of "Aspen Court," I find him humorously contemplating the possibility of a certain value attaching to his signature. Horace Mayhew had written on May 27th, 1856 :—

"NEW INN,  
"WYCH ST., STRAND.

"DEAR SHIRLEY,

"Come down to-morrow to the Derby outside a coach. They start in dozens from my door—only a sovereign apiece. Come . . . quick, I am waiting for you.

"Yours (expecting your corporeal 'yes'),  
"HORATIUS."

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

And Shirley had scribbled on the back :—

“ Not a bit of it, you extravagant Croesus ; if I go I shall go for 4s. by rail, and sponge on the Philistines  
If it's fine and *warm* look out for

“ S. B.

“ I have not one d——d scrap of note-paper. What would the world give for two such hautographs ? ”

Now, two years later, he received a formal application, and the applicant, Mr. W. H. Doeg, is generous enough not only to lend me his reply, but also to face the condemnation which commonly attaches to such demands. And I think we can forgive him when we realise how very young he must have been at the time. Shirley, as usual, shows great ingenuity in his response.

S. B. TO MR. W. H. DOEG.

“ THE TEMPLE,

“ Oct. 22nd, 1858.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ I am not a ‘ distinguished man,’ but the distinguished service which *you* did in the days of Saul, commemorated in the 18th verse of the 22nd chapter of the first book of Samuel, precludes me from disobeying your desire.

“ I am, dear Sir,

“ Your obedient servant,

“ SHIRLEY BROOKS.

“ Mr. Doeg,

“ Edom, etc., etc.”

The allusion is of course to Doeg, the Edomite, who “ fell upon the priests, and slew . . . fourscore and five persons that did wear the linen ephod.” Shirley

## THE "LITERARY GAZETTE"

had no great love for priests as a class, although, as we shall see, there were some notable exceptions.

Later, attacks from autograph-hunters became something of a nuisance, but he could never find it in his heart to refuse their flattering, though troublesome, demands.

Here is an entry on the subject in his diary for 1871, which carries a wholesome lesson with it, and one which I would beg all autograph hunters and unknown correspondents to lay to heart.

"Somebody, Algernon O. Simon, London University, no, University College, writes for autograph, but sends no envelope. Told him he owed me a penny, and was to pay it to the first ragged child he saw."

The only other events calling for mention this year were the appearance of Shirley's bust in the Royal Academy Exhibition, and his acceptance of the editorship of the *Literary Gazette*. The bust was numbered 1288 in the Royal Academy catalogue, and was one of several exhibited by a certain Mr. J. E. Jones, whose fame is unknown to me. I have been unable to trace its present whereabouts, if indeed it is still in existence. The fact of its execution is only worth mentioning as an indication of Shirley's increasing importance in the world.

His appointment to the editorship of the *Literary Gazette* on the other hand was a matter of considerable moment. Not only was it a still further call upon his already highly-taxed energies, but it was a further proof of the esteem in which he was held by the proprietors of *Punch*.



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

The *Literary Gazette* was starting on a new lease of life, and Shirley was chosen by Messrs. Bradbury and Evans, who now had a part interest in it, to be the first editor of its "new series."

The following letter, referring to his proposed conduct of the paper, has been put at my disposal by the kindness of Mr. Lawrence Bradbury :—

S. B. TO F. M. EVANS.

" 29th November, 1858.

" MY DEAR EVANS,

" I am not going to write you a long letter, but I could wish you to give your thought to what I am going to say, before we meet.

" The first of the conversations—articles (I have a name for them, of which more anon) is in the printers' hands, but I do not wish you to see it until I have read and revised it, which I shall do the first thing to-morrow morning, D.V. It is necessarily introductory, and therefore unlike, except in form, what I propose to make its successors, but I have designed and named a set of *dramatis personæ*, and indicated their characters, and my machinery, and have met divers enquiries and objections. It seemed necessary to be, at the outset, somewhat business-like, lest dull folks should fear flightiness and flippancy. When on the line we can put on the steam.

" What I am undertaking is, however, not a light matter. It is an undertaking, on my part, to supply every week, for I hope many a year of success, a dramatic paper, on all subjects, written as well as I can write it, and on which my own reputation, laboriously earned, will depend. It will be known by everybody to be mine, and mine only. It will therefore be, as a

## “ THE FRENCH PORCUPINE ”

Animal, but he Don't Look like it,” was hammered out at the table.\*

“ In general,” writes Mr. Silver, “ Wednesday was our dinner day, but it was sometimes changed to Thursday, as was the case upon the 10th of February, in the year ‘ fifty-nine.’ Leech told us then he wanted ‘ something simple ’ in the way of the Big Cut, for he was going out of town for a day’s hunting with Tenniel. So the good ‘ Professor ’ thought of a ‘ slim ’ Yankee crying to a Spanish Don with a cheroot in his hand, ‘ What’ll yew take for that ar’ Cuba ? ’ a suggestion which may now seem to have been prophetic. But the French were then ebullient, and Shirley was for picturing their Emperor with his sword drawn—‘ You can *draw* a sword, you know, Leech ’—sitting on a powder barrel and smoking the pipe of peace. ‘ Yes, that’s easy enough,’ says Leech, ‘ but how can people know that it *is* the pipe of peace, unless I put a label on it, and that would look ridiculous ? ’ And then the happy thought occurred to him of picturing the Emperor as ‘ The French Porcupine,’ all bristling with bayonets. ‘ Ah, you’ve hit it now,’ cries Shirley, ‘ there’s plenty of point there ! ’ And next day Leech did the cartoon in a couple of hours’ work, and then lunched quietly and met Tenniel at King’s Cross for the 1.45 to Baldock. Sure of hand, he drew the figure on the wood block, without making any sketch for it, as he had before done Mr. Punch’s Fancy Ball, which was far more elaborate, but the dozen or so of figures were drawn within three hours.”

The following letter shows that by 1860 the Brookses had moved to 22 Brompton Square. The “ lines about Macaulay,” who had died on the 28th of December,

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\* *Vide Punch*, Vol. XXXVI, p. 74.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

appeared on the first page of *Punch's* new volume printed in old English type, and run as follows :—

“ O dying year, didst wreak thy latest scoff  
On those who, wearied with thee, bade thee go,  
And, parting, didst with palsied hand strike off  
The noblest name our Golden Book could show ?  
Vain spite ! Self-branded, thou shalt pass away,  
Bearing his life whose fame was England's pride,  
But through the ages English tongues shall say  
' That year ! an ill one. Then Macaulay died.' ”

The “ medical meeting ” referred to was supposed to have been called together “ for the purpose considering the propriety of presenting a testimonial from the Profession to the Clerk of the Weather,” whom they wished to return thanks for the prevail influenza epidemic.

“ Truly,” says Dr. Emulgent, “ they [the doctors] ought to be thankful, for never was there so much sickness about—not dangerous, mind you, for that would be wrong to be glad of, besides it being difficult to deal with, but that sort of very troublesome, irritating, disagreeable illness that made everybody fidget and frightened, unless the medical man was constanter in the house.”

“ Letters of Excuse ” refers to an article entitled “ A New Literary Invention,” for which the curious reader must be referred to the pages of *Punch* (Jan. 7 1860, p. 12).

S. B. TO PERCIVAL LEIGH.

“ 22 BROMPTON SQUARE, S.W.,

“ January 3rd, 186

“ MY DEAR LEIGH,

“ I was very glad indeed to receive your note and heartily do I wish you the happiest possible

## PERCIVAL LEIGH

year. If anybody deserves one, you do, for your conscientious work, and still more for your unselfishness and self-sacrifice to the comfort of others, but you know what I think about this, and so only once more, a happy 1860 to you.

"The weather is hijus. 'The wind is roaring in turret and tree,' and the row it makes down here, in our open back is perfectly pestering. But I look on a church (of England, mind) an Oratory (Popish), and the long row of Brompton Boilers, which is the best of all, and the pictures highly-to-be-seen-before-lunch, as I hope you will find out ere long. So I am not quite shut up in the red box called a street.

"I hope you will break it gently to Scamp,\* that in future his master's house will be pervaded by a youth. I fear that it will be too much for S. But Heaven tempers the schoolboy to the scratched dog. In other respects your nevvv is to be envied, and I shall impress upon him that you have the freest admissions to pantomimes and whatever else is best worth his notice.

"I will deliver your greetings to the *P.P.* † to-morrow. I have eight lines in *Punch* about Macaulay, which I rather hope you will like; also the 'Letters of Excuse'; also the 'Medical Meetings,' etc., etc., for I have worked hard. The truth is that *Luke Orange* ‡ made a jolly row the other day, for he was reduced to his last shred of copy to make up the number, and was indeed I believe driven to 'write himself,' while I were gorging at the 'Albion' in Aldersgate Street. This touched my heart, so I cut away, as you will see.

---

\* Leigh's dog.

† *P.P.*, *Punch* people. *P.P.* was embossed on the *Punch* envelopes and probably, Mr. Silver thinks, stood for *Punch* paper.

‡ Mark Lemon.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

But don't let him know I told you of his wrath, as he mollified afterwards.

"Write again. Can I send you any newspaper or anything for work or play? Say so, if so. My wife adds her best regards. Give mine to your brother, with all New Year greetings.

"Ever yours faithfully,  
"SHIRLEY BROOKS."

From the year 1860 onwards, Shirley, following the example of many of the *Punch* men, appeared from time to time as a public lecturer. One of the most popular of his discourses had the House of Commons for its subject, and was given for the first time at Leicester on the 19th of March of this year.

The notorious Daniel Dunglas Home, the spiritualistic medium, was now the talk of Europe, and both *Once a Week* and *Punch* busied themselves with exposing what they considered to be his charlatanry. "Recent Spirit-Rappings," and a series entitled "Spirit-Rapping made Easy," appeared this year in the former, and in the latter amongst other typical articles was "*Mr. Punch as a Spirit-Rapper*" (June 9th, 1860).

On July 2nd Shirley wrote to Percival Leigh :—

"We have made the Spiritualists unhappy, and their rejoinder this month is miserably weak. However, I think that the Lord has delivered them into our hands, for they attack *Leech* personally (though civilly), and allege that, though he has seen a lot of things in the spiritual line which he can't explain, he caricatures. I hope he will come out with his fat medium."

The "fat medium" refers to *Leech's* caricature of the Emperor Napoleon III, which had appeared on

## SPIRITUALISM

May 12th, in which a "spirit hand," obviously a stuffed glove at the end of a stick, is seen coming out of the clouds, and, as *Punch* afterwards said, "assisting the Imperial Nose to form that derisive combination of the nasal and digital organisations which is vulgarly called 'Taking a sight.'" This caricature had been suggested by the following passage from the *Spiritual Magazine* :—

"Four persons were sitting together at the Tuileries : the EMPEROR and the EMPRESS, the DUCHESS DE MONTEBELLO, and MR. HOME. A pen and ink were on the table, and some paper. A Spirit-hand was seen, and presently it took up the pen, and in their sight and presence dipped it in the ink, went to the paper, and wrote upon it the word 'NAPOLEON,' in the autograph of the great EMPEROR. The EMPEROR asked if he might be allowed to kiss the hand, and it went to his lips, and then to those of the EMPRESS ; and afterwards, on MR. HOME making a humble request, he was permitted to kiss its warm and soft texture. The autograph is now among the valued contents of the 'EMPEROR'S spiritual portfolio.'"

At first *Punch* laughed at Home as a more or less harmless impostor, but later on, when he got mixed up in certain very shady monetary transactions, he declared himself an implacable opponent.

In the letter quoted above Shirley further says, "I hope you have seen my lines, 'Victoria's Midday Review.'" The Queen had reviewed eighteen thousand of her lately banded citizen soldiers in Hyde Park, and Shirley's spirited verses beginning :—

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

“ They tell us a tale that we dare not ignore,  
That deep in a glade we have hunted before  
A Tiger is waiting to spring ;  
And so we come up to our Queen as of yore  
Our fathers came up to their King,”

struck the high patriotic note which was echoed by *Punch* on every available occasion. True, the Volunteers came in for a good deal of harmless chaff at his hands by and by, but only in a friendly manner and in the way of business. At heart he was profoundly moved by the patriotism and self-denial shown by those who realised the imminent possibility of a French invasion.

“ We come that the Lady of Kingdoms may know,  
In the day, should it chance, that her bugles shall blow  
She shall find Hunter-Soldiers astir ;  
And the men whom her signal shall launch on the foe  
Shall be worthy of dying for Her.”

Shirley was not a second Ram Dass with fire enough in his belly to burn away the sins of the whole world, but he had enough fire in him to be a good lieutenant to *Mr. Punch* in his fight for what was high, noble and patriotic, and in his self-imposed mission of laughing away what was foolish, bad or contemptible.

Encouraged by the success of “ The Gordian Knot,” and notwithstanding the fact that he was more and more overwhelmed with newspaper work, Shirley now embarked on another serial novel. This time he worked for Messrs. Bradbury & Evans, and “ The Silver Cord ” ran from November 16th, 1860, for ten months in their newly established periodical, *Once a Week*, where again he had the valuable co-operation

## A DEBAUCH OF LYING

of his friend, John Tenniel. Here he set himself to write a story, "devoid as far as possible of description, either moral or physical, and resting its claims to attention on action and dialogue, after the manner of the French novels of the day."

Discussing the novel on its appearance in book form the following year, when it was shorn of its chief attraction, the Tenniel illustrations, the *Illustrated Review* said, "The work is called on the title-page 'A Story'; it might more accurately have been dubbed 'A Story of Stories.'" And certainly Oscar Wilde himself would have found no Decay of Lying here. The book begins with Arthur Lygon, the hero, a really fine fellow, telling a string of lies to his servants and children. Then he goes and repeats the lies to a Mr. and Mrs. Berry. Then Mr. Berry lies to his wife, and immediately after to Arthur Lygon himself, all, be it said, with the best possible motives. The orgy of lying is now in full swing. Old Mr. Vernon lies to his eldest daughter. Monsieur Silvain, the perfumer, lies to Mrs. Lygon; Henderson, the maid, lies to Laura. Mrs. Berry lies to Arthur. Arthur lies to Robert Urquhart. Bertha lies to Arthur. Laura's sister lies to Laura. Mrs. Urquhart lies to Henderson. Henderson lies to her mistress. Her mistress tells Henderson to lie to her husband, and then follows suit and lies to him herself. Price, another maid, lies to Mrs. Berry. She also lies to Mr. and Mrs. Hawkesley. Bertha lies to everyone she comes across. And Monsieur Wolowski and his police spy, liars by profession, fill up the gaps left by anybody else. Indeed,



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

by the time we get to the end of the book we should be hard put to it to find two persons who had not lied the one to the other. The result is profound dissatisfaction on the part of the reader, who wonders, when the end comes, whether the author has disentangled all "the well-selected falsehoods," which he, the reader, certainly has not.

The novel, however, attracted a great deal of attention, and Shirley was inundated during its progress with suggestions from his readers as to what he should or should not make his characters do. Two persons separated by the events of the narrative must be reconciled. This, that, and the other expedient for bringing about the desired re-union are tendered to the author. One particularly remorseless correspondent affectionately urges him to "kill one of the children in order to reconcile the parents across its tomb." This he absolutely refuses to do on the ground "that Herod had of late been too rampant among the children of novels to justify the repetition of the expedient. A great Master," he continued, "set the example and did it so exquisitely that his inimitable workmanship should have warned off parodists, but a Massacre of the Innocents set in, and happy is the novel-reader who gets through a second volume without weeping over a slain child."

Another correspondent, a very practical person this time, desired to know how a gentleman in a public office managed to stay away as long as he did without forfeiting his situation. To this Shirley replied, as the French critic did, when asked what personal attractions

## “THE SILVER CORD”

Penelope could have had for Ulysses after all those many years of his ramblings, “that it would be well if persons would attend to their own affairs and believe that heroes are the best judges of their own business.”

But, notwithstanding his jaunty treatment of his correspondents, he was in reality profoundly dissatisfied with the limitations imposed upon him by serial publication, and determined that his next, and what was to prove his last, venture of the kind should appear on its first issue in book-form.

Nor were his friends hitherto much impressed by his novels, notwithstanding their success with the public. They were not as good as they anticipated. They were not worthy of the great gifts which they knew he possessed. The fact that he was only novel-writing in his spare time and that his best energies were sapped by other exacting labours was either ignored or forgotten.

As Mr. Frith wrote in his “Reminiscences” :—

“I confess his novels were disappointing to me. I had read one, ‘Aspen Court,’ I think; and having, rather hypocritically, given it more praise than I fear it deserved, Brooks said, ‘Wait till you read the “Silver Cord,” my boy; *that* will improve your mind, if it is not too far gone for anything wholesome to act upon it.’

“The ‘Silver Cord’ came, and took its place upon the drawing-room table. Brooks called one day—some time after he had presented the novel—caught sight of his book, took it up, examined it, and, with an expression I shall never forget, said, as he threw it down, ‘Not even cut.’”

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

The book had, like its predecessors, been mostly written at Mark Lemon's house at Crawley, whence he wrote to Mr. Evans just before the appearance of the first instalment :—

“ I am making good use of my time here, and therefore do not wish to come up till the afternoon. I send up a line, however, to say that I am at work on my book, that on Monday the first portion will be in the printer's hands, and I suppose he will hand it to Tenniel on Tuesday, and that by the end of next week, there will be *three* numbers out of my hands. This is all I could say if I came up.

“ I don't think that Mr. Reade's or Mr. Meredith's shortcomings have anything to do with me, though Lucas seems to think so, and speaks of them as having both 'broken down.' I am not going to break down, D.V.”

The reference to “ Mr. Reade's and Mr. Meredith's shortcomings ” has a certain irony about it. “ Evan Harrington,” Mr. Meredith's immortal novel, had just ceased running, and had not proved a popular attraction. Charles Reade's masterpiece, “ A Good Fight,” afterwards enlarged into “ The Cloister and the Hearth,” had preceded it and had fallen equally flat. And Lucas, the editor, was looking to Shirley Brooks to revive interest in the magazine with “ The Silver Cord ! ” Now, “ The Silver Cord ” is broken indeed, whilst “ Evan Harrington ” and “ The Cloister and the Hearth ” are classics, and have taken undisputed places on our shelves.

A month before the novel started on its serial course Shirley wrote to Miss Betty Lemon, asking for her

## LADY ROMER

judgment upon the chosen title and pointing out its similarity to that of the earlier novel, "The Gordian Knot."

S. B. TO MISS BETTY LEMON.  
(Now Lady Romer.)

"Once a Week OFFICE,  
" 11 BOUVERIE ST., FLEET ST.,  
" LONDON, E.C.  
" Oct. 5th, 1860.

"MY DEAR BETTY,

"The opinion of Vine Cottage is respectfully requested in *favour* of the *title* of the new novel by the distinguished personage who recently occupied the best bedroom in that establishment. The christening has taken place this day, and the name in question is, you see, still in the *Knot* line.

".....  
" Ever yours affectionately,  
" THE SILVER CORDWAINER."

To this I may append the following sentence from a letter written to me by Lady Romer, throwing as it does a side-light on the surroundings amidst which the book was written.

"Mr. Brooks stayed frequently with my father and mother when I was young, and at home, and he entered into all the fun and amusements of our large family in a way that very few men of his position would have done, and we were all so fond of him, and so proud of the interest he took in us."

It is a curious commentary, as I have said, upon the contemporary judgment of literature and upon contemporary taste that Lucas, the editor of *Once a Week*,

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

should have anticipated, and apparently with some reason, that a novel by Shirley Brooks should make up for "the shortcomings" of Mr. Meredith and Charles Reade. To us who now turn over the pages of the bound volumes of the magazine and recognise how finely matched were author and artist in "Evelyn Harrington"—Charles Keene, as great an artist in black-and-white as George Meredith in pungent satire—it is nothing less than a mystery that "The Silver Cord," overpowered as it is by the beautiful illustrations after John Tenniel, could have had any prospects at all. Not that the story is without ingenuity, but it is dull, tiresome, and long-winded. Now and again we meet with a good idea passably expressed, but far more often with a good idea marred by slovenly writing. Just think how Mr. Meredith would have expressed this, for example:—

"Marion was tall, but not especially so, and height is a merit in its way, but not especially so when one avails oneself of it as a tower of espial, and rejoices in the ability to look down with undue ease upon the misdoings of a shorter world—and so did Marion Wagstaffe use those extra inches!"

That is a good idea about as badly expressed as may be. That Shirley, given time, could do better than that we know, but the fact was that he was giving himself no proper chance. He was a hack ridden by a printer's devil, with Time barking at his heels. That was the reason. The excuse lies in the fact that he had a family to provide for.

That the novel had some success is apparent from

## LITERARY METHODS

the fact that, on its publication in book-form, it at once ran into a second edition, and that it was still being reprinted in 1865, as is proved by Shirley's entry in his diary for that year :—

“ The cheap edition of the ‘ Silver Cord ’ is out to-day, and 1,200 have been already taken by the trade. The Press is to be worked a little—this I consider as much matter of business, in these days, as reading one's proofs.”

Which incidentally shows that there were ways of making the cat jump in those days as in these.

About this time, Mr. Silver tells me, Thackeray and Shirley were comparing notes about their writing. Thackeray was now editing the *Cornhill* and contributing to it “ The Roundabout Papers.” “ It takes me a couple of days to choose a subject for a ‘ Roundabout,’ ” he said, “ then a day to write it and I earn a hundred pounds. When I get my nose down to the desk the thoughts come pretty freely.” “ So do mine,” said Shirley, “ but I haven't got a desk, and I never think of a subject beforehand. The words flow fast enough, but not in a flux like some folks.”

That was just where Shirley failed, and Thackeray succeeded. Thackeray thought out and digested his ideas before he put pen to paper. Shirley scratched away at his paper until the effects came. There was just the same difference between their work as there was between the black-and-white work of two others of the great *Punch* brotherhood. Charles Keene never laid a line down without being sure that it conveyed his exact meaning. Du Maurier laid down a dozen

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

lines before he discovered the exact meaning he wished to convey. As Charles Keene left nothing, so did Thackeray leave nothing, to chance. As Pope has it,

“ True ease in writing comes from Art, not chance,  
As those move easiest who have learned to dance.”

Shirley left everything to chance, trusting to his cleverness to pull him through, with the result that his “ easy writing ” produced what Sheridan called “ cursed hard reading.”

I hope I shall not be accused of whipping a dead horse, but my object is to show what interest may lie in the personality of a man whose work has come to be of little or no living importance.

And, lest Shirley the man should have been too long lost sight of in the strictures which I have been passing on his writing, let me conclude this chapter with one of those bright scintillations of his brain, not unconnected with the comparison drawn above between him and Thackeray, which have made him unforgettable amongst such of his contemporaries as have survived him.

Mr. Silver, Shirley and Thackeray were together three years later [1863] discussing Miss Annie Thackeray's beautiful “ Story of Elizabeth.” Thackeray expressed the pride he felt in such a daughter, and declared that her novel had all his better and none of his worse qualities.

From this sweeping judgment Shirley and Mr. Silver dissented, but they agreed that he did well to be proud

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\* Mrs. Ritchie.

## MISS ANNIE THACKERAY

of a daughter who, in those days of slipslop scribbling, could write such pure and well-cadenced English. "She reminds me," said Shirley, "of Minerva springing fully-equipped from the brain of Jupiter. I hope she won't cut me now she's famous and I'm an old fogey." Then one of his nimble thoughts flashed into his brain, and he exclaimed with a sigh :—

"When a man gets middle-aged '*Eheu! labuntur anni.*' How the Annies slip away from him!"



## CHAPTER XI

1861-1863—6 Kent Terrace—Harriet Martineau—Literary Pensions—  
—“Poet” Close—Holywell Street—The Prince Consort—  
—“Timour the Tartar”—“The Card Basket”—Letters—  
—“Sooner or Later”—Why Shirley Failed as Novelist—Nursery  
Rhymes—The *Musical World*—Death of Thackeray—Bust in  
Westminster Abbey.



URRIEDLY as London of the last century is passing away, there are still portions remaining which express the mind of the people who originally built and inhabited them, and being a little off the track of modern “improvements,” continue to speak to us of the conditions under which those people lived. The Regent’s Park is one of these back-waters, and is only properly peopled in my mind by

ladies wearing crinolines and gentlemen with side-whiskers, by little girls whose trousers reach down to their ankles, and policemen who wear top hats.

## NO. 6 KENT TERRACE

And it was there, under conditions of which these were some of the outward signs, that the Brookses and their children went to live in 1861. It was at No. 6 Kent Terrace that the last twelve years of Shirley's life were spent, those years in which he was to attain to the height of his ambition and in which he was to gather around him the host of friends who, when the time came, so sincerely mourned his loss.

At first he also had working chambers at 2 Tanfield Court. Later he gave these up, and did such work as could not be done at the "Bedford" or the *Punch* offices at home in the study behind his dining-room.

In the diary of 1871 he quotes from that of 1861, "Thank God, moved into a house of my own, and kissed E. as mistress. . . . Came out to get some food, and took her back a turquoise basket and chain, and a bottle of fine Madeira." That was one of the little dramatic effects that he was so fond of arranging on epoch-making occasions. Then, sitting down at a little table they drank success to the new experiment. And from that moment that little table became something sacred, a sort of altar on which they had poured out libations to the god of domesticity. Once indeed its sanctity was for the moment forgotten, and the incident duly recorded in the diary of ten years later. Mrs. Brooks, wanting a new small table, "got one (in exchange) for some money and for a table which she had had a long time. But, remembering that this was the first table at which we sat in this house—that at which we had a bottle of Madeira together the day we came—she got it back again."

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

That is a pretty touch, worthy of Mr. Pepys himself, and characteristic of Shirley's tender sentimentality.

As we proceed we shall find record of much interesting company which passed through the Brooks's hospitable door and of many a notable entertainment. For the moment we must content ourselves with two quotations, the one from Mr. Frith's "Reminiscences," the other from a kind letter written to me by Miss Ellen Terry.

Mr. Frith says :—

"It would be too great an effort of memory to recall the names of the celebrated people I have met at Shirley's table. Charles Kingsley and Mark Twain were there the same evening, I think—the former with the drawback of a slight stutter, delighting us with his bright talk ; and the latter with his quaint humour ; Brooks always ' holding his own ' in that or any other company."

And Miss Terry :—

"My acquaintanceship with Shirley Brooks was slight. I was very young when I met him at the house of my dear friend Tom Taylor. He appeared to me to be a brilliant creature, sunny and kind. He had a handsome wife, and they gave pleasant dinner-parties at their house in Regent's Park. . . . I met him first during the Canterbury cricket week, and then went to two or three dinner-parties at his house. Mark Lemon, the Tom Taylors, John Tenniel, Piatti, Joachim, Clara Schumann, du Maurier, Sir Alexander Duff-Gordon, Christopher Weguelin, Thomas Sidney Cooper and his son, Madame Venturi, and many other interesting people I met there. I admired Mrs.

## “ POET ” CLOSE

Shirley Brooks, and thought she would ‘ make a fine *Lady Macbeth*.’ ”

The following peculiarly interesting letter addressed to Shirley at this period has been most kindly sent to me by Mr. George Dunlop, of the *Kilmarnock Standard*. It raises two points of great importance, firstly, that of Literary Pensions, secondly, that of the religious formalities attending the taking of oaths, both of which matters were of vital significance in the career of the writer, Harriet Martineau.

In April, 1860, a civil list pension had been granted on the recommendation of Lord Palmerston to a wretched doggerel-writer named John Close. His sycophantic muse had gained him the patronage of the nobility and gentlefolk in and around his native Swaledale, and, chiefly through the influence of Lord Carlisle and Lord Lonsdale, he had obtained a widespread and most undeserved recognition. The bestowal of the pension was nothing less than a public scandal, and on May 2nd, 1861, the matter was raised in the House of Commons. As a result the pension was cancelled, the “ Poet ” Close receiving a solatium of £100 from the Royal Bounty.\*

This was the moment at which Miss Martineau wrote her letter and recounted her own experiences. On the subject of literary pensions and the manner in which they were granted the distinguished authoress held strong opinions. As early as 1832 there had been

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\* For further particulars of the “ Poet ” Close *vide* the “ Dictionary of National Biography,” Vol. II, *Sup.*, p. 34.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

talk of conferring one upon her, and the offer had been repeated in 1840 and 1841, but she consistently refused to accept such recognition of her services to literature on the ground that it should be conferred by Parliament itself altogether irrespective of the Government. Feeling ran high on the subject, and Lord Brougham, on hearing her name mentioned, so far demeaned himself as to exclaim, "Harriet Martineau! I hate her! I hate a woman who has opinions. She has refused a pension—making herself out to be better than other people." That was as contemptible and insolent as it was dishonest, for he well knew that her very logical and unselfish view was that political independence was essential to honest and useful literary work. The pensioners of a party are tongue-tied. The pensioners of a nation have a charter to speak out the truth that in them lies.

That is the first matter with which the letter deals. The second is of even greater importance. The story of the gradual substitution of solemn affirmations for religious oaths, where there are conscientious objections to the attendant formalities, is too long to be recapitulated here. It is enough to remind the reader that the struggle with Mr. Bradlaugh in 1880 brought the matter finally to a crisis, and that, since 1888, in all cases where formerly an oath sworn upon the Bible was necessary, an affirmation may now be substituted.

The condition of things in 1861 is plainly set forth in the following letter, which would seem to have been written in response to one from Shirley Brooks enquiring as to the claims of Close to public recognition.

## LITERARY PENSIONS

HARRIET MARTINEAU TO S. B.

" AMBLESIDE,

" WESTMORELAND,

" *May 15th, '61.*

" DEAR MR. BROOKS,

" Though I am a Westmoreland ' Stateswoman ' I never heard of this poet, and I doubt whether my neighbours ever did. We will inquire. It seems a very bad case, and I will look out for an opportunity of bringing it forward. I don't at all like the method of those literary pensions. When it was repeatedly attempted to get me to accept a pension—Mrs. Somerville and I being wanted to cover some bad jobs in that department—I was told that it was ' a great honour.' I did *not* refuse out of pride; but still I could not think it an honour, when I saw how Mrs. Somerville was paraded, and how I should have been paraded if I had accepted, to turn the public attention away from some indefensible grants. You are probably hardly old enough to remember how Lord Melbourne treated Faraday. His tone, in public, and Lord Palmerston's, and that of every Minister except Peel, about these literary pensions is, to my mind, insufferable, when they think, all the while, that they are *so* kind! We want a wholly different system, in which the decisions shall not rest with Prime Ministers who don't read, under a Queen who reads nothing. We want a larger system, generous and dignified, and in the hands of some administrators who could be respected by scientific and literary people. Perhaps we ought not to be sorry that so flagrant a case as this of Close has occurred, to show how badly the present system of dole by favour or caprice answers. If I can treat of it I will.

" I have been thinking of writing to Mr. Evans on

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

a matter which I will rather mention to you—though I don't know what, precisely, your connection with *Punch* is. I am sorry—everybody is sorry—to see *Punch* treat the Rochdale Oath case as he does. I think he can hardly be aware what the denial of justice is to persons whose oath or whose testimony is refused in Courts of Justice. Are you aware that thieves, and police, and low attorneys now ascertain who the persons are who cannot get justice? Are you aware that some of us—and I for one—have been pointed out in a newspaper as safe subjects for burglary, garrotting, etc.? Are you aware that some of the best clergymen, as well as the best lawyers we have, are earnestly endeavouring to get an Affirmation Bill passed, which shall restore the witness-box to its proper use, instead of its being used for the ascertainment of people's theological opinions? Mrs. Maden was the most modest, quiet, harmless witness that could be. She did not obtrude her opinions. She did not refuse the oath. (After Lord Campbell's and other Judges' avowals people may regard the oath as a form of asseveration without being necessarily dishonest.) She would have taken the oath, and troubled nobody; but the opposing lawyer catechised her, and then she spoke the simple truth. I never heard of her before; but I entirely respect her now; and I do *not* respect *Punch* the more for taking the wrong side in a case of liability which becomes more urgent every day, and in which relief is becoming absolutely indispensable. It is bad enough that a citizen should be precluded from obtaining justice. It is bad enough that he should be subject to insult in Court from lawyers who often know and believe less than he does. But it will be a great additional shock if the hue and cry is to be hounded on by *Punch*, from whom so much better things are expected. I hope this is the last time he will

## “CLOSE’S GUSH OF GRATITUDE”

help the denial of justice to precisely the persons who will not tell a lie to obtain their rights. You may have nothing to do with all this, but you may be able to convey to the Editor or Editors what is thought by me, and by many others, and by some whose opinion is of great value and importance.

“ Believe me very truly yours,

“ H. MARTINEAU.”

Whether or no Shirley took any active part in the oaths and affirmations matter I do not know, but he was not slow to take a hand in ridiculing the “ Poet ” Close. Miss Martineau’s hint was at once acted upon, and shrewd blows were struck by him in two sets of verses purporting to be from the pen of the doggerel-bard himself. The first was entitled “Close’s Gush of Gratitude” (*Punch*, June 1st, 1861), and was a happy parody of Close’s fulsome panegyrics. It began :—

“ For this kind pension thou hast gave,  
All thanks to thee, great Pam,  
I am your most obedient slave,  
Upon my soul I am.”

and ended :—

“ For he is as good as he is great,  
And when he comes to die,  
I only hope that we both shall meet  
In yon purpureous sky.

“ Till then I’ll always sing his praise,  
That I’ve determined on ;  
And truly proud I am to hear  
His name, like mine, is John.”



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

This was followed a fortnight later by "Poet Close Changes his Mind." It concludes :—

"To be a pensioned slave of State  
Unsuited my haughty mind,  
I choose to have my genius free,  
Uncabined, unconfined.

\* \* \*

"And when old Pam goes down below,  
His epitaph I'll pen,  
'Here lies the wretch who pensioned Close,  
And took it away again.'"

That was the end of the "poet" so far as *Punch* was concerned, but he continued for thirty years longer "to issue little pamphlets of metrical balderdash," extorting "shillings from thousands of visitors to Windermere, and stamps from numerous sympathisers all over the country."

This year, amongst other windmills against which Shirley tilted, was that sink of iniquity, Holywell Street, which some of the respectable inhabitants now proposed to re-christen Booksellers' Row. He prophesied :—

"The doom has gone out and the dens will go down,  
Too long a vile scandal on London's renown ;  
An Architect's waving a potent right hand,  
Devoted to sweep off the pest of the Strand."

But, as we know, "the Architect" was very slow about it, and "the old Holy Well" was not made "holy again" until forty years later.

About the same time he penned one of those happy epigrams which fashioned themselves so easily in his brain :—

## THE PRINCE CONSORT

### HOMAGE TO THE SCOTCH RIFLES.

BY A SPITEFUL COMPETITOR.

“ It seems that the Scots  
Turn out much better shots  
At long distance, than most of the Englishmen are :  
But this we all knew  
That a Scotchman could do—  
Make a small piece of metal go awfully far.”

These were of course merely the squibs of the professional jester who had to keep the pot boiling, but the year was big with a matter which stimulated his pen to greater issues. *Punch* in the past had taken the popular and misguided view of the Prince Consort's conduct in his very difficult position, and Shirley had not been guiltless in the paper's cruel attacks on one whose position precluded him from retaliation, and whose high character and noble self-effacement were pitifully misunderstood. In 1855 the Prince had been made a Field-Marshal, and Shirley had written a spiteful set of verses entitled “ The Toy of the Field Marshal's Child,” breathing the same spirit as was shown by the picture of *Mr. Punch* looking at the Academy portrait of the Prince at a review and saying “ No. 24. A Field-Marshal ; h'm—very good indeed. What sanguinary engagement can it be ? ” Later on it is said that a hint from Windsor Castle resulted in a modification of this hostility, and soon after the attacks ceased altogether.

And now, on December 14th, 1861, the object of these attacks lay untimely dead. He had lived down the prejudice against his foreign nationality and had

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

won his way to the hearts of the people. Shirley was chosen to express *Punch's* agreement with the popular verdict, and to make such amends as were possible. And it must be confessed he rose nobly to the occasion. A few verses must suffice :—

“ Gallant, high-natured, brave,  
O, had his lot been cast in warrior days,  
No nobler knight had won the minstrel's praise,  
Than he, for whom the half-reared banners wave.

\* \* \*

“ It was too soon to die.  
Yet, might we count his years by triumphs won,  
By wise, and bold, and Christian duties done,  
It were no brief eventless history.

\* \* \*

“ Could there be closer tie  
'Twixt us, who, sorrowing, own a nation's debt,  
And Her, our own dear Lady, who as yet  
Must meet her sudden woe with tearless eye ?

“ When with a kind relief  
Those eyes rain tears, O might this thought employ !  
Him whom she loved we loved. We shared her joy,  
And will not be denied to share her grief.”

This was not the only time that *Punch* made such amends as he could for misjudging a noble character. Indeed, we shall see later that he was not above eating humble pie most humbly, thereby showing himself the gentleman he was, when events proved his judgment to have been too hastily formed.

Shirley was not yet done with playwriting, and 1861 found him collaborating with John Oxenford, the great dramatic critic of the *Times*, in “ Timour the Tartar,

## THE GERMAN REEDS

or the Ironmaster of Samarkand." The nature of this extravaganza, founded as it was on the story of Tamerlane, may be gathered from the explanatory letterpress which significantly stated that "a trifling lapse of time between the years 1361 and 1861 occasionally occurs." It occupied the stage of the "Olympic" at Christmas of this year.

Nor was this the extent of his theatrical activity at this period.

Earlier in the year the German Reeds and John Parry had scored a great success with his triologue entitled "The Card Basket," a dramatic trifle which started life with only one parent, but has since, in a curious way, acquired another. Some years later, I think in 1875, after Shirley's death, Mr. Arthur à Beckett was doing "stock author" work for the German Reed entertainments. It was decided to revive "The Card Basket," but no "book" could be found. Mr. and Mrs. Reed, and Corney Grain, who had succeeded John Parry, had but a vague recollection of the plot and the points. All they could remember with distinctness was that there were three sisters who all said "dear me." That was, it must be admitted, little enough to go upon, but Mr. à Beckett rose to the occasion, and set to work to re-write the play from these ineffectual hints and from his own inner consciousness. The result proved a success, and the Press of the day was loud in its praises of "Shirley Brooks's dialogue," for it still stood in his name, declaring with one accord that it was "so much better than the dialogue of the moment." Thus did Mr.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

Arthur à Beckett act as "Ghost" to his old friend, and thus did the Fourth Estate show that it is not always to be trusted when it sets up as *laudator temporis acti*! The manuscript of "The Card Basket" (new edition), which was never published, is now in the possession of Mr. Florian Williams, the music-publisher of Great Portland Street, as is also that of Shirley Brooks's "Pyramids," also unpublished, written for the German Reeds, and first produced at the Gallery of Illustration on Feb. 1st, 1864.

With this last ends the list of Shirley's contributions to the stage, leaving out of account various prologues and speeches written for special occasions, of which we shall find some mention when we come to the Diaries.

In later years Shirley was accustomed to deplore what he considered the decadence in the writing of burlesque. He would speak of the "palmy days of Planché," whose polished lines put to the blush the slap-dash, slip-slop work of those who followed him. Apropos of this Mr. Silver writes to me: "One day at the *Punch* dinner-table, after the business of the evening was transacted, Shirley said, 'Good legs will carry off bad rhymes, and people chiefly go to look and not to listen. And so players don't take pains to say their words intelligibly, and instead of good burlesques we get bad puns and breakdown dances.' As a sample of stage-writing, he thought the verse 'An upright monarch and a downright fool' was rather a good line of his own, when rightly spoken. And he agreed with me in praising Mrs. Keeley for the clearness of her utterance. As an instance of her cleverness

## BURLESQUE

in saying a risky word without a hint of coarseness, I cited her Aladdin (from a rather faulty memory) :—

‘ I pegged my pegtop on my tutor’s toes :  
His arm descended while his anger rose.  
’Twas not upon my top his vengeance fell,  
Nor did he “ kiss the place to make it well ! ” ’

Then we recalled the solemn entrance of her husband, as Prince Aladdin’s Ambassador, knocking boldly at the palace door, and astonishing the gorgeous footman by the question, ‘ Emperor at home ? ’ delivered in a manner of inimitable dignity and impudence.”

That is all very well, but we who, in later years, were blessed with a Nellie Farren, an Edward Terry, a Fred Leslie, and a Royce, will be slow, I think, to admit that anything that happened in burlesque before the seventies, so far at least as the actors were concerned, was inimitable. In respect of the writing of burlesques Shirley was nearer the mark, and we must all regret the days when, in his own words, there were “ not only people who could act burlesques, but also people who could write them.”

In the following letter “ the patriot, Digby Seymour,” refers to the sitting member for Southampton, whose commercial transactions, for which he had been censured by the benchers of the Middle Temple, had not escaped *Punch’s* eagle eye. “ Fisk’s ” was, and perhaps still is, a well-known Southampton public-house. “ The Show ” was the second of our International Exhibitions, held on this occasion at South Kensington. The domes and some other parts of the structure were eventually re-erected in the Alexandra

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

Park, Muswell Hill. "W. M. T.'s very fine dinner" was a *Punch* dinner, held by special invitation at Thackeray's new house on Palace Green on July 9th. Mr. Silver remembers that their host, after showing them round said, with not unnatural pride :—

"This house and all the things in it have somehow come to me out of my inkstand."

Only one more *Punch* dinner was held there, on July 22nd of the following year, when Mr. Silver recorded in his diary, "conversation was subdued and not remarkable for brilliance." Shirley, it is true, raised a laugh by declaring that Shakespeare had proclaimed "Ponny" Mayhew's quality in the line :

"The Prince of Darkness is a gentleman ; Modo he's called  
and Mahu,"

but that seems to have been the best thing of the evening. It would almost seem that impending sorrow was already casting its shadow over the house which was so soon to mourn the loss of its noble-hearted master.

The "bit of Walter Scott about the Rifle Match" referred to verses entitled "The Battle of Wimbledon," in which Shirley jubilantly recorded how the English team had turned the tables on the Scots :—

"But calmly England stood and shot  
And sternly snuffed out every Scot  
Who tried the desperate game,  
For Halford sent the fatal lead,  
And Heaton put his foes to bed,  
And Halliday unceasing sped  
His balls with matchless aim."

Finally the scores stood at 890 to 724, and England had had her revenge.

## INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION (1862)

S. B. TO PERCIVAL LEIGH.

" 6 KENT TERRACE,  
" REGENT'S PARK, N.W.,  
" S. *Swithin*, '62.  
[July 15th.]

" MY DEAR LEIGH,

" No, not bloater, but ham and eggs, but the moral is the same. I was very glad to hear from you, not knowing but that the patriot, Digby Seymour, might have avenged upon you any little freedom of old *Punch's* by debauching the young lady at Fisk's into poisoning your beer.

" No news. I have had to do with the Show twice in three days, having Scottish cousins with me. On Saturday we went among the Swells, and yesterday among the Rabble—the contrast (dress apart) very noteworthy. The Swells are, generally speaking, handsome, and they lounged, evidently in a state of enjoyment of a lofty kind, smiled, and went away self-complacent; the people are as a rule ugly, they looked careworn and cross, but they *did* everything at a hand-gallop, and towards five were utterly beaten and miserable, giving the most vacant stares at the few remaining sights. There were about 10,000 babies in the place, and when the organ stopped you could distinctly hear the sound of their sucking. Many children lost, but the police quite understand the business and walk off the roaring little creatures until their parents gradually attain to a conviction that by asking a few questions they may recover their live bundles. Altogether there was matter for scribble, which I suppose to be the final cause of all that is done and said in these days.

" W. M. T. gave us a very fine dinner, for your comfort be it mentioned: turtle, venison pasty, salmon



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

cold, turbot hot, aspic, and all the rest of it, stunning claret, and ninepenny weeds. He has fine large rooms I think we were a little 'melancholy and gentleman like,' and we invented a cut for the disparagement of the vulgarian Cobden, as became Kensington gardeners.\* Leech will have a fine old house at Kensington with half-an-acre of garden. A friend of mine would have taken the house, but there were more big drawing rooms than he could utilise. So J. L. can make an out and out studio.

"I have seen nobody since the end of the week, of our lot, except Pater, at the Show. I suppose we eat to-morrow. I did a bit of Walter Scott about the rifle match, for *P.P.* at the last moment. I was looking at Callcott's† 'Southampton Water' yesterday and thought of you. *O rus!* etc.

"Kindest regards to your brother and Mrs. Leigh.

"Ever yours,

"S. B."

The "not even cut" episode of his last novel might well have fixed Shirley's determination to be done with publication by instalments, and show the world and his friends of what he was really capable as an artist and not as a mere mechanic. But the publishers and the *res angusta domi* were against him. The first knew what paid them best and the last was calling louder and louder for relief. Thus it was that he again succumbed, though not without insisting to some extent on his rights as an artist, to the importunity of his

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\* *Vide* "The Old Sentinel," in which Palmerston is depicted catching Cobden pouring water into the touch-holes of the English cannon. Pam (*loquitur*), "Don't you meddle with things you don't understand, young feller."

† Sir A. W. Callcott.

## “SOONER OR LATER”

friends Bradbury & Evans to write them a serial novel. Fourteen monthly numbers was the contract, but he demanded an extension when he found himself too much restricted. As a result “Sooner or Later” shows great advance upon its forerunners and proves that, had he devoted himself to this class of literature, he might well have taken high rank amongst the novelists of the period. After running for about eighteen months it was published in book form, illustrated by his friend George du Maurier.\*

The story is far more closely knit than its predecessors. The plot is strong, the characterisation good, the conversation witty and well-sustained, giving pleasure by its ingenuity and allusiveness apart from its value in expediting the catastrophe. Perhaps the most amusing part of the book is that where he uses his own editorial experiences in his description of Mangles, the editor of the *Vivisector*, and Mr. Pruth, his assistant. We still laugh ruefully at, because we still suffer from, the same “thorns in the cushion.” There is the lady who demands a kind review of her poems because her second cousin was tried by a court-martial in India, of which the editor’s father was a member. And there is the gentleman who asks for a puff of a play on the ground that the author and himself were vaccinated from the same child. There, of course, we have an adumbration of Dickens’s exaggerative manner, but we laugh and that is the important thing.

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\* I am told that the family now uses the capital (Du Maurier), but the artist in writing to me used the little “d.”

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

It must not be concluded, however, that because there is a good deal of comic relief the novel as a whole is written on the frivolous plane. Indeed, he got into the same trouble as Thackeray did with "Pendennis." It was complained that he had dared to give an unvarnished account of the life of a young man about town. To this he replied that he refused to be a party to "the mockery of escaping into generalities, which mean nothing to those unacquainted with evil, and are laughed at by those who are less fortunate." Again, he was accused of "unfriendliness to what is not improperly called the religious world." To this he retorted that the charge had been made "without sufficient attention to the entire bearing of the work, and notably without regard to the character in which is embodied the best form of religion which the author can typify."

The book closes with a notable passage in which he claims for the newspaper the part which has in the past been filled by the poets who "have worked and gone." A new journalistic dynasty has been founded, truthful, scholarly, and fearless, which is as salt to the sea, and keeps society from becoming as "the gilded puddle the beasts would cough at." This new journalism is, he says, compact of catholic recognition and non-insular postulates "which are already a religion lacking neither its priests nor its sacrifices." It asks no plaudits. It dreads popularity as a proof of weakness. "Some of us," he concludes, "who have perhaps looked doubtfully on and listened moodily (to) evil which forces itself on eye and ear, and have felt

## LITERATURE IN PARADISE

that 'but to think is to be full of sorrow,' have been helped . . . to maintain the belief that a day will dawn in which this Lazarus of a world will hear the words of power that came to the brother of her who sat still in the house." That is nobly put. That is a high and splendid ideal of journalism, often enough expressed, but how often woefully abandoned in the upshot.

As to the fate of his novels Shirley himself had, I think, no illusions.

"One day," Mr. Silver tells me, "he said he wondered whether among the joys awaiting us in Paradise there would be found time for the leisurely perusal of good literature, unread in our hard-working and overcrowded days on earth.

"Leigh pressed him for the list of volumes he would choose. But Shirley protested that it was not possible to prepare off-hand a catalogue for the immortal library. He was clearly of opinion that not more than three English novelists (himself of course not among them) should be included. Of one thing, however, he felt certain, and that was, that no little of the current literature of the day (save the mark!) would be forced as a torture on the denizens of 'the other place'!"

And I must confess that, if Shirley Brooks's earlier novels are to be found in the Plutonian library, that is another reason why I, for one, must take care to be good.

The following letter shows that there was some delay in the completion of the novel for publication in

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

book form, and some resulting friction with his friends,  
the publishers :—

S. B. TO MESSRS. BRADBURY & EVANS.

“ 20 BOUVERIE STREET, E.C.,

“ *Nov. 29th, 1862.*

“ MY DEAR B. & E.,

“ It is with sincere regret that I am obliged to answer your letter by saying that though I am exceedingly hard at work on the book, and that it is the one business of my days, it is not as yet in a state to be put into your hands. You will, I know, accept in all faith the assurance of an old friend, that the delay arises simply from his resolution that the work shall be as good as he can make it, and consequently as valuable to all of us, and also that I am much grieved and disappointed at the delay. But I am so convinced that you are aware of my feelings on the subject that I will not enter, at all events in writing, into them, but will only request that you will regard my position from a business as well as from a friendly point of view, and believe that the moment that I can place the MS. in your hands, I shall do so with more gratification than I can express. I have re-composed much of the book, by which I feel that it is a great gainer, and when it is out I will show you in an hour's confidential talk the ample vindication of the delay.

“ Meantime, believe me,

“ Ever, my dear B. & E.,

“ Yours most truly,

“ SHIRLEY BROOKS.

“ W. Bradbury }  
and } Esqs.”  
“ F. M. Evans. }

In a former chapter we have considered Shirley as verse-maker. We have now from time to time

## TRICK-WRITING

considered him as novelist and found him wanting. One reason for this was, as has been said, the exigencies of serial publication. But there is, I think, another reason not far to seek. It was Shirley, the verse-maker, who went far to ruin Shirley, the novelist. For I make bold to maintain that the habit of versifying is in itself antagonistic to the clear thinking that we want in good prose. Pure thought is the primary occupation of the mind. Then the conveyance of that thought by the very clumsy vehicle, language. So, when we say to the thinker, "Make us verses," we say in effect: "We fully recognise the clumsiness of your medium, but we insist on your handicapping yourself in its use by cutting it into given lengths and decorating it with rhymes." Just as we might say to the butler, "Open the door as quietly as you can, but don't omit to turn a somersault as you turn the handle." The result is we not only get the door opened noisily, but we get the somersault turned inadequately. Sense and rhyme, both beautiful things when left unwedded, are warring the one against the other. The wedding of them presents a task only to be tackled by the greatest. That, I think, is why, in these practical days, verse-writing is a drug in the market. We want inspired sense. We do not want trick-writing. That has been done as well as it can be done in the past. Its day is over.

But when Shirley Brooks lived there was a great love of rhyming in England, and it had a disastrous effect on him as a writer of prose. The man who is for ever on the look-out for rhymes is training himself

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

to a fatal topsy-turveydom. Where there should first be the thought, then the clothing of it in language, the rhymester first thinks of words, then of the thoughts suggested by those words. Or, if the thought does come first, it gets emasculated by being fitted in between words that rhyme. Verse may, I admit, give the thought a glamour which mere prose would not, but that glamour is as likely as not to hide the thought's poverty.

And there is more than this. Our rhymester is for ever being led away at tangents by thoughts suggested by his rhymes. He does not first catch this thought and forthwith imprison it in language, but in his search for bars he catches sight of a dozen thoughts and goes hunting them through a maze of pretty enough words and never catching anything at all. He just gets hold of them by their tails and then loses them. This is bad in itself, but it is worse in its consequences. Like journalism, it loosens a man's habit of mind. Like journalism, it makes him think in snippets. Like journalism, it unfits him for the prolonged, continuous, steady mental effort necessary to the production of a well-balanced book. The part comes to be of greater importance than the whole.

So we find that there were three Shirley Brookses standing in the path of Shirley Brooks, the novelist. First, there was Shirley Brooks, the journalist. Secondly, there was Shirley Brooks, the serial-writer. Thirdly, there was Shirley Brooks, the versifier and rhymester. And the greatest of these three was the last.

## “ LIMERICKS ”

Apropos of which we may remember the words which Mr. Thomas Hardy puts into the mouth of Henry Knight, in “A Pair of Blue Eyes,” when asked by Elfride why he doesn’t write a novel. “We all,” he says, “have our one cruse of energy given us to make the best of. And where that energy has leaked away week by week, quarter by quarter . . . there is not enough dammed back behind the mill at any given period to supply the quantum a complete book on any subject requires. Then there is the self-confidence and waiting power. Where quick results have grown customary, they are fatal to a lively faith in the future.”

At the beginning of 1869 Shirley began contributing to *Punch* a series of “Nursery Rhymes,” now better known as “Limericks.” Many of these were charmingly illustrated by Charles Keene and du Maurier. They were, according to a note appended to the title, “to be continued until every town in the kingdom had been immortalized,” but, although he showed by choosing such difficult names as Carshalton, Cirencester, and such like that no rhyme was difficult enough to daunt his ingenuity, they did not run to a greater number than thirty-eight. The following, which has point in more senses than one, may be given as a good example :—

“ There was a young lady of Cheadle,  
Who was deeply beloved by the beadle,  
But she scoffed at his prayer,  
Left her work on his chair  
And the beadle sat down on the needle ! ”



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

I have spoken of Shirley's love for children and how he was at his best with a crowd of them around him listening round-eyed to his favourite "Jabberwock." And in this he was not singular amongst the *Punch* men. I should like to enlarge upon this tender characteristic of the remarkable men who have made *Punch* what he is. But this would be going outside my province.\* One thing I may do, however: I may quote from Mr. Silver's unpublished records a pretty enough picture, in which Shirley is one of the prominent figures:

"Leech," says Mr. Silver, "had lately fled from the barrel-organ fiends infesting Brunswick Square, to the fine old house which Millais had found for him in Kensington; and thither we were bidden on Wednesday the 25th of February to his little fair-haired daughter's birthday party. Ada would be nine years old, and she was her father's special favourite; although her coming to the world had cost him a day's hunting. For just before her birth he and Millais, who rode often with him, had just pulled on their hunting boots and were waiting for their horses, when suddenly the nurse summoned him to go off for the doctor!

"I came a little late on the evening of the party, and found Shirley standing at the door of the front drawing-room.

"Look," said he, "the Guildhall's come to Kensington. There stands Gog and Magog!"

"The older guests, the 'grown-ups' as they're called now, were gathered in the front room; and in the other, which was larger, were the children dancing. At the corners facing us, and towering above the little

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\* Besides which, is it not well written in the XIIIth chapter of the "Chronicles" of Mr. M. H. Spielmann?

## “ ZAMIEL’S OWL ”

dancers, stood Thackeray and ‘ Big ’ Higgins of the *Times*, the famous ‘ Jacob Omnium.’ They were both of them four inches more than six feet high, and were alike benignly smiling on the merry-makers. It was a pretty scene, and when I told the happy hostess of Shirley’s happy thought, she promised ‘ John ’ should make a sketch of it. But I fear he never did so.”

This year James Davison, the well-known musical critic of the *Times*, started in the *Musical World*, of which he was editor, a strange sort of go-as-you-please correspondence column, to which he himself contributed under a variety of aliases, and Shirley Brooks, who was one of his intimate friends, under that of “ Zamiel’s Owl.” \*

There had been for years an interchange of amenities between the two papers. For example, when Davison married the great pianist, Arabella Goddard, in 1859, Shirley had written in *Punch* :—

### “ AD ARABELLAM.

“ A Fact, long known to him, kind *Punch* may be  
Allowed to congratulate his *rara avis* on.  
Joy to the Lady of the keys! From G  
The music of her life’s transposed to D,  
And Arabella Goddard’s Mrs. Davison.†”

From 1863 to the end of his life Shirley contributed to Davison’s paper, his last offering being

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\* For this information I am indebted to my friend Mr. Charles L. Graves, who now sits at the immortal “ Table.”

† Misprinted “ Davidson ” in “ Wit and Humour.” I quote the above from memory, and fancy I have improved upon Shirley’s grammar.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

a friendly little puff of Arthur Cecil (Blunt). This appeared in the shape of a nursery rhyme in December, 1873.

The year 1863, which had on the whole been an uneventful and happy one in Shirley's life, was destined to a gloomy ending. On Christmas Eve Thackeray died. "It was," wrote Shirley, "on a good day for himself, the journal and the world that Thackeray found *Punch*," and it was "as if the glory of *Punch* had been irremediably dimmed," when Shirley and fifteen thousand more of those who mourned the great satirist laid him to rest in the cemetery of Kensal Green. Thackeray, "the brave, true, honest gentleman, whom no pen but his own could depict as those who knew him would desire," was gone, and the gaiety of nations was eclipsed.

To Shirley, in common with all the *Punch* men, the blow was a heavy one, for though Thackeray had retired from the paper, he had continued in constant intercourse with his old colleagues.

Shirley's part in doing honour to his memory consisted, Mrs. Ritchie reminds me, in acting as secretary to the fund for erecting the bust which now stands in Westminster Abbey—an office which was no sinecure in the case of one who, like Shirley, did what had to be done with his own hands. Here are three subsequent entries in his diaries, from which it is plain that it was easier to get promises of support than to see those promises realised, and that the whole burden of the matter rested on the honorary secretary's shoulders.

## THACKERAY'S BUST

*" Nov. 21st, 1865.*

" Two o'clock. Have just returned with E. from the Abbey, where, at twelve to-day, Baron Marochetti removed the covering from the bust of

' W. M. T.,'

in the presence of the daughters, his baroness, and ourselves. The Dean, Stanley, came in later. So, I have done my work for my friend and I am rejoiced thereat. S. B."

*" March 3rd, 1869.*

" Looked into the Abbey, to see bust of W. M. T., which I have not seen since Macaulay's was put next. Looks, now, as if part of the place, and I rejoice in my work, for ' alone I did it.' "

*" April 16th, 1869.*

(Three-and-a-half years after the bust had been unveiled !)

" Sent Farrer & Ouvry cheque for £100 balance due to Marochetti's executors, and thus disposed of a matter that has given me more trouble than I anticipated, but I rejoice to have done a friend's duty by W. M. T. I am a deal out of pocket, but mean to have some back from those who ought to assist."

## CHAPTER XII

1864—The Shakespeare Tercentenary—A Royal Recluse—"Parties"—Letters—The Autograph Fiend—The Anglo-E Question—Gout—Hymn to St. Trophimus—"Sooner or L—A "Breeze" with Messrs. Bradbury & Evans—Illnes Death of Leech—Advent of du Maurier to the Table.



THE year 1864 marked the tercentenary of Shakespeare's birth, and "Shakespeare National Committee" contemplated gilding the lily, and pairing the rose. From the following letter, as well as from one which appeared in the pages of *Punch* about this time, it is clear that Shirley had little sympathy with the movement. Hepworth

Dixon, with whom he was afterwards on friendly terms, was at this time editor of the *Athenaeum*, the organ of the dominant executive of the "Fusion." *Punch* certainly did not mince matters in dealing with him and his colleagues. He suggested that "The Shakespeare Incapables," as he called them, should perform a Shakespearian Shadow Pantomime and continued: "We think one of the old women

## A HINT TO THE QUEEN

sit on the Committee might be readily selected to take the part of columbine ; and there need surely be small labour in looking for a clown, when so many of the Committee have been known to play the fool." Finally, having thrown all the cold water he could on a national memorial, which one enthusiast proposed should take the form of a porcelain tower a hundred feet high "to enliven the scenery of the birthplace of the sweet Swan of Avon," *Punch* paid due homage to the immortal bard, by producing his own superb "Tercentenary Number." That is one of the many matters alluded to in the following letter.

"Leah" refers to the American actress, Kate Josephine Bateman, who appeared 210 times in that rôle in the play of "Deborah" at the Adelphi.

The "cut" referred to is that entitled "What the Nation hopes to see," which was prompted by the same motive which suggested Shirley's "Loyal Whisper to a Royal Recluse" :—

"Nay, let my people *see* me." Kind  
Was she whom then our cheers were greeting ;  
Now, would that Lady bear in mind  
That words like those are worth *repeating*."

The article, "What it is Coming To," was a skit upon the too great leniency shown towards criminals by the magistrates of the day.

The "mangling of one Passmore Edwards" took place in an article entitled "A Mechanical Donkey."

Under the title "Starvation Parties" in the same number Shirley advocated a simpler style of entertainment than was then in vogue, following the good

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

example set by the ladies of the Confederate States of America, amongst whom money was at that time very scarce. "Judy Parties" he proposed to call them, and continued: "Husbands will be found far more pliable, in the matter of party-giving, when wives point out that everybody has gone away pleased, and yet the cheque wanted for the expenses of the night is a very small one."

S. B. TO PERCIVAL LEIGH.

*"Monday, Jan. 18th, 1864.*

"MY DEAR PROFESSOR,

"Your note was very welcome—all your notes are. There is a beastly fog which penetrates to one's brains, and makes it impossible to write anything worth reading, so I shall go to the Shakespeare Committee, and do my duty in wrangling and hearing wrangle. I think the thing will come a cropper. I could not well be out of the business, when I have all along held that the idea of a memorial was foolish. The real memorial is in the fact that England thinks and talks Shakespeare. It would be almost as reasonable, to speak with due reverence, were we to propose to erect a memorial to the Author of the Bible, for fear He should be forgotten. I think, however, that Theodore Martin, Tom Taylor, and yours truly, who are like the Three Anabaptists in the 'Prophète,' have done a good deal in the way of hindering downright bosh, prize poems, 'special services,' and the like, and we are not without hope of showing the General Committee that there is no time to prepare a worthy memorial. The Mayor of Stratford called on me on Saturday, but missed me. I fancy he wants me to join them. I shall not, but their celebration is all very well, a jolly Shakespearian fête, as it were, with the 'Messiah,' by

## THE BATEMANS

way of infusing a little gravity into the business. Hepworth Dixon has been awfully sat upon. You will see that I continue to 'note' the Thackeray matter. I hope you liked my memoir in the *Illustrated*, or did you see it? If not I will send it to you.

"My dear Leigh, I've nothing to tell you. We, that is my wife and *me*, dined with Leah, not Leech, though it looks like it.\* He has returned to town last night, and when I tell you the party and the fare, you will see that there were materials for a pleasant evening. The Batemans are the nicest Americans I ever met, in fact quite English. She is not, I apprehend, very clever, except in her calling, but something better, and as merry as a bird. The mother *is* clever, and dramatised *Evangeline* for Kate, to Longfellow's satisfaction. They have constant relays of American food: yesterday we had wild turkey (noble bird), canvas-backed ducks (perfect), corn (Cobbett's), and hominy—you can't read that—**HOMINY**. Very fine wines. To eat and drink and laugh came Oxenford, Webster, Robert Bell, Charley Kenney and his pretty wife, and *us*. Perhaps there were too many quinces in the apple-pie, for I think half a party ought to be fools, or silent, and everybody wanted to both talk and listen, which is a problem of difficult solution. But we were very merry from 5.30 to 12.30.

"The cut this week will be the new baby *and the Queen*,† a hint to the Dowager Lady Guelfh to come out. If you have any ideas for the next do send me a line on Tuesday night. The article 'What it is Coming To' is mine, and a Crawley bit. I have mangled one Passmore Edwards, who wrote Mark a frantic letter. I have advocated Judy parties,

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\* Referring to his indistinct writing of the word.

† *Vide Punch* for Jan. 23rd, 1864.



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

modelled on our own. I mean some which the ladies of the *Punch* lot hold. Fred Evans's wife, Charley Dickens's, mine, etc. No dress, no wine, except sherry, but a pretty supper : beer, grog, baccy, and the ladies *don't* retire, and everybody does at 11. Ask Mrs. Fred if that isn't sensible ? Have you heard this ? A man enters the law to get *on*, keeps in it to get *honour*, comes out of it to get *honest*. This to Fred, with all my regards.

“ Ever,  
“ S. B.”

Next in order of date comes a letter, lent to me by Mr. W. L. Fleming, which may be recommended as a model reply to the autograph hunter :—

S. B. TO A. VOGUE.

“ REGENT'S PARK,  
“ *Whit-Tuesday, 1864.*

“ SIR,

“ I am happy to hear that I have so many good qualities, as you assign to me, and I am, in addition,

“ Your obedient servant,

“ SHIRLEY BROOKS.

“ A. Vogue, Esq.”

“ Although Shirley was always a most welcome guest elsewhere,” writes Mr. Silver, “ he very seldom missed a dinner at the *Punch* Table. His first absence through ill-health occurred in 'sixty-four, on the 20th of April, when *Mr. Punch* received his friends in Bouverie Street as usual, after giving them a luncheon in St. Bride's Court, Fleet Street, to welcome Garibaldi on his visit to the City. On the following Wednesday Mark showed a note from Shirley, saying that he was ' full of morphia and misery,' and that ' Pater must let you fellows have some of what *he* calls champagne that you

## THE DANO-GERMAN QUESTION

may drink to my good health, for I shall be forty-nine next Friday.'

"Christian Science was unknown in those unenlightened days, or its professors might have claimed that our good wishes helped to cure him. For in the next week he rejoined us, and made several good shots at the Big Cut. One of the best was 'Gulliver John Bull Capturing the Austrian Ships,' which had arrived in the Downs, where our Channel Fleet was watching. This, however, he amended to 'The Burglars and the Bobby,' a title which gave place to 'The Aggravated Policeman'—Mr. Bull threatening Austria and Prussia, who had broken into Denmark, and who, as Shirley next week added (by reason of the armistice) were 'remanded for a month.'"

The Dano-German question was now causing great anxiety in this country. The Austrian and Prussian allied forces had invaded Denmark, and England was threatening to send a fleet to the Baltic to insist upon the maintenance of Danish security and independence. But the Government at the last moment refused to take the responsibility of plunging the country into war, and *Punch* decided to support the Government. This decision resulted in the fine cartoon by Tenniel, mentioned by Mr. Silver, in which John Bull, as Policeman A1, rather unsatisfactorily threatens the two burglars, Austria and Prussia, "You're not on our beat, you scamps, or I'd let you see."

This *non-possumus* view of the case was by no means popular in the country, more particularly because the outrage was being committed on the father of the then Princess of Wales, our present beloved Queen Alexandra. This fact was quaintly alluded to in the

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

“Police Court Extraordinary” in *Punch* for the following week, where “two ruffianly looking personages of foreign appearance . . . were charged with an aggravated assault . . . on a poor little Dane, Christian Glucksbourg, who, it was stated in the Court . . . *has a daughter very respectably married in this country.*”

The reference in Mr. Silver’s note to “misery and morphia” shows that Shirley was already beginning to suffer from the recurrent attacks of gout, which punished him so severely for the remainder of his life. As time went on his sufferings became very acute, but he never allowed them to interfere with his work, when work was possible, perpetually rising superior to the depressing effects of the disease and its very drastic remedies. Indeed, he did not hesitate to turn into a joke for the amusement of the public what was anything but a joke to himself. Tragedy and comedy were not far removed when he wrote his “Hymn to St. Trophimus,” the saint whose bones repose in the church of St. Philip Neri, and are supposed to have the peculiar virtue of curing gout, lumbago and rheumatism. For the moment he changed his old pen-name of Epicurus Rotundus into Epicurus Arthriticus, and wrote with a wry enough face :—

“Yes, *culpa mea!* I have loved, and fear may love again,  
Hock, Sherry, Chablis, Burgundy, Moselle, Yquem, Champagne,  
Lafitte, Old Port, Noyeau, Chartreuse, Madeira, Punch in Ice ;  
And golly ! good St. Trophimus, ain’t Maraschino nice ? ”

And so he goes on through sixteen verses, praying desperately for relief, but ending up all unrepentant :—

## “ ODE TO ST. TROPHIMUS ”

“ O cure me, dear St. Trophimus, *and send me back again*  
*To Hock, Moselle, and Burgundy, Yquem, Lafitte, Champagne.*”

And, it must be confessed, these verses contained a chapter of his autobiography. He loved good eating and drinking, and, when he was well, forgot that he had been ill. He did what all of us do—he sowed his oats and trusted to Providence to see that they did not come to fruition.

“ Yes, *mea magna culpa!* ‘ When the Turtle’s voice is heard ’  
I always take three plates, not always stopping at the third :  
When other soups are going, and I’m puzzled to take which,  
*Richesse oblige*, I make a choice of that as looks most rich.

\* \* \*

“ Truffles, St. Trophimus, I take in every given form,  
Enriching other viands, or in paste alone, and warm :  
They keep me humble, dear St. T., upon my word they do,  
They preach a lesson that a man’s himself a fungus too.”

And then he completely gives himself away :—

“ I take but little exercise, it really seems so hard  
From honest gains a cabman should unkindly be debarred.

\* \* \*

And I have gout, St. Trophimus, which makes me wince and roar,  
And wonder what I’ve done to earn a punishment so sore.”

Of course, he didn’t wonder, he knew perfectly well, but he shut his eyes to consequences, and the gout and the truffles and the turtle-soup and the champagne and his sedentary life eventually killed him, as it is killing so many of us to-day. It was the old story over again :—

“ Indeed, indeed Repentance oft before  
I swore—but was I sober when I swore ?  
And then, and then came Spring, and Rose-in-hand  
My threadbare Penitence apieces tore.”

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

“ P.S.—I will send you my *exact* address as soon as I know it. Let me add that I have *no doubt of handing you the complete MS. before the end of the year.*”

Eventually, as we know, the novel got finished, and, after running serially, was published in book form in 1868.

On April the 7th Mr. Gladstone in his Budget speech, which Shirley described as “ a magnificent intellectual effort,” proposed a reduction of the Income Tax and Sugar Duties. The difficulty was to embody the subject in a cartoon. Shirley came out with the unfamiliar Shakespearian quotation :—

“ Vain flourish of my fortune !  
Why strew'st thou sugar on that bottled spider,  
Whose deadly web ensnareth thee about ? ”

but Tenniel objected that there were limits to the suggestiveness even of his powerful pencil, and that to make a bottled spider look like the Income Tax was beyond the realms of Art !

At the next *Punch* dinner, as Shirley noted in his diary of that date, John Leech was “ clearly ill.” Later on Shirley recorded of this dinner :—

“ He complained of illness and pain, and I saw that it was difficult to make him grasp the meaning of things that were said to him without two or three repetitions. He left early with Tom Taylor.”

In the autumn Leech went to Whitby, whence he wrote to the Brookses that their joining him would induce him to prolong his stay. They started at once, determined that, if Whitby were benefiting

## AT WHITBY

his health, he should not leave it for lack of their companionship.

At Whitby, where they remained until Leech returned to London, Shirley attended a concert at St. Hilda's Hall to hear Grisi, Mario, Sainton and his wife, and records in his diary: "Introduced to Grisi, who was in a vile temper." Of the entertainment he sent a characteristic account to the *Musical World*, concluding as follows:—

"I was dressed in a black coat, waistcoat, and trowsers, white cravat, lavender gloves, and patent leather boots, and the little boys of Whitby, unaccustomed to such splendour, cheered me as I came out, privately and alone, to dip my beak in the gascon wine, that is, in some excellent beer, in which I now drink your health.

"If you have another reporter, your own special, in the town (I saw two or three persons who looked disreputable and enthusiastic enough to be musical critics—or even dustmen), and he had kept sober and sent you a report, you need not print this. I do not care a horse's mamma whether you print it or not. But I had a delightful evening, and I do not care who knows it; in fact, I wish everybody to know it, and that is why I write to your widely circulated (and widely yawned-over) journal. You have not been over civil to me, of late, which is very ungrateful. You may say, with an attempt at wit, that the owl was a baker's child, and therefore crusty. I believe that you could win the prize for the worst conundrum in any circus in Yorkshire.

"Receive the assurance of my profound respect,

"Ever yours,

"Whitby."

"ZAMIEL'S OWL.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

On Oct. 3rd they were back in London, and a fortnight later Leech was *in articulo*. Here is the entry from the diary :—

“ I called at 27 Bouverie Street, and heard from Evans that he was very ill. We went off to the Terrace, Kensington. He was in bed, but no one seemed frightened, and there was a child’s party—a small one. Mrs. Leech was in tears, but certainly had no reason to apprehend the worst. He would have seen us. We remained three-quarters of an hour or so, but an opiate had been given, so it was of course felt that he ought not to be disturbed.”

“ At 7 o’clock that night,” wrote Shirley in the *Illustrated London News*, “ it pleased God to release him from sufferings so severe as even to make the brave, patient, enduring man say that they were almost more than he could bear.” And on Sunday, October 30th, “ After hearing all he (Evans) could say, I went with him to telegraph to Mark Lemon, and also to Leech’s. Millais and Leigh at the door. Heard much from them. Mrs. Chester came up. Charles Eaton, Mrs. Leech’s brother and best friend, had come. We went in and saw him. . . . He looked noble in his calm ; the hair and whiskers put back gave up his fine forehead and handsome features, and the eternal stillness gave his face an elevated expression. I looked a very long time on my old friend’s face. We had known one another many years, and he has been engaged with me in business as well as pleasure. He was very kind, very good, and is in heaven, whatever that means.”

This was followed on Nov. 12th by Shirley’s public eulogy in the pages of the periodical which Leech had so well and truly served.

## DEATH OF LEECH

“ JOHN LEECH.

“ Obiit October XXIX, MDCCCLXIV.

“ Ætat 46.

“ The simplest words are best where all words are vain. Ten days ago a great artist, in the noon of life, and with his glorious mental faculties in full power, but with the shade of physical infirmity darkening upon him, took his accustomed place among friends who have this day (Nov. 4th) held his pall. Some of them had been fellow-workers with him for a quarter-of-a-century, others for fewer years ; but to know him well was to love him dearly, and all in whose name these lines are written mourn as for a brother. His monument is in the volumes of which this is one sad leaf, and in a hundred works which at this hour few will remember more easily than those who have just left his grave. While society, whose every phase he has illustrated with a truth, a grace, and a tenderness heretofore unknown to satiric art, gladly and proudly takes charge of his fame, they, whose pride in the genius of a great associate was equalled by their affection for an attached friend, would leave on record that they have known no kindlier, more refined, or more generous nature than that of him who has been thus early called to his rest.”

That was a proper tribute to one who during twenty-three years had contributed no fewer than three thousand drawings to *Punch*, of which at least six hundred were cartoons, and whose pencil had never suggested an impure thought or lent itself to the rousing of unkindly passion. “ The good ship had,” in Shirley’s own words, “ lost its mainsail,” and all with whom Leech had worked should surely vie one with the other to do him reverence. But that he was



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

disappointed at the slackness in this respect of at least one of his colleagues is obvious from the following undated letter, the latter part of which would seem to refer to the surprising fact that Leech's death was passed over in silence by *Once a Week*, whose pages his work had so constantly brightened and adorned.

S. B. TO PERCIVAL LEIGH.

" 6 KENT TERRACE,

" REGENT'S PARK,

" *Saturday*.

" MY DEAR LEIGH,

" (I write, however, at B. & E.'s, having just done.) I hope you are enjoying yourself. I can't say that I exactly *am*, having the vilest influenza, added to which, having steeped my senses in chlorodine, I came down here at 12 to-day, thinking there would be little or nothing to do, and find Stacy wants 4½ columns, or the *P.P.\** can't come out. *Que voulez-vous*, the thing had to be done, and was done, but how? Bishop and excursions, *New York Herald*, "Georges," Nursery Rhymes, etc., etc. Such is life.

" That was a long puff of J. L., well deserved by him, but *we* ought to have had more said, as I imparted very frankly to the discomfited Lucas.† Mark is in the d—dest rage, and I think won't let L. come to any more dinners.

" Kindest regards to Fred. I am too used up to send a story.

" Ever,

" S. B."

When Leech's twenty-one coloured etchings from the Pocket-Books were re-published under the title of

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\* *Punch* Pocket-Book.

† Editor of *Once a Week*.

## GEORGE DU MAURIER

"The Follies of the Year," Shirley seized the opportunity of associating his name with that of his dear friend, by contributing the descriptive letterpress which gives unity to these delightful productions.

The vacancy at the Table caused by Leech's death was taken by George du Maurier, and Mr. Silver tells me that, on his first appearance, he made the Staff a little uncomfortable by referring to his blindness. After complaining that people were for ever calling him "*de Maurier*," and expressing the hope that the *Punch* men would give the devil his "du," he went on to remind them that he was blind of one eye, and begged them to pardon him if he failed at any time to "see" a subject that might be suggested for his pencil.

"But," said Shirley, "Tenniel has only one eye left, and it really *is* the left, for he lost his right while fencing, whilst you have your right eye left. So you see you two fellows have two good eyes between you, and a pair of good eyes are far better than a score of bad ones. In the country of the blind, you know, the one-eyed man is king, and here we're blind as bats—to one another's failings. So I drink to your good health, you two one-eyed royal Majesties."

That was very characteristic of Shirley. Faced with an awkward situation—and the situation is always awkward when a man refers to any physical disability from which he may chance to suffer—his ready wit would at once respond to the necessity of saving the situation. It was part and parcel of his kind-heartedness—a kind-heartedness which mellowed and ripened the older he grew. And this mellowing of his

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

the very small trouble. Keep it to *us* (omitting the business element), and keep it quite dark till the day. May I put you down for £1?

“ Ever,

“ S. BROOKS.

“ 6 *Kent Terrace,*

“ *Regent's Park.*”



## CHAPTER XIII

1865—The Diaries—The Christening of the Two Boys—Death of Abraham Lincoln—*Punch's* Great Recantation and the Question of its Authorship.

MENTION has been made in an earlier chapter of the fate of Shirley's papers and diaries, religiously preserved by him for the autobiography which was never written, and, after his death, recklessly destroyed or cast to the four winds.

It is a fact something more than tantalising to his biographer that Shirley began keeping a diary as early as the year 1852 ; that this he continued to do until the day of his death ; that but five of the precious volumes have escaped, or at least come to hand ; and that these five are not consecutive. Indeed, to follow out his life is like the following out of one of those buried rivers which here come to the surface for a while, and there bury themselves underground, only to reappear laden with the secrets of unrecoverable experience.

Hawked about London after his death by one of his sons and sold for the few wretched shillings such things fetch, this invaluable series found itself scattered here and there, one year divorced from the next, on the shelves of this, that and the other old bookshop.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

Two of these flotsam and jetsam of fate have come into the hands of Mr. Venning by purchase from a Brighton bookseller, and have been generously placed at my disposal. Three others have come into my own hands by purchase in Oxford Street, cheek by jowl with two of his unfortunate son's own diaries—the son on whose future Shirley had staked his highest hope, the son whose wasted life can be read between the lines of these melancholy pages.

On the first of the boy's diaries, dated 1873, is written in Shirley's hand :—

“ To Reginald Shirley Brooks  
from his father.

*Nulla dies sine linea.*”

When these words were written the future was bright with hope. The blank sheets awaited the record of a life. Father and son were full of confidence. And at first the pages give evidence of good work and strenuous endeavour. But all too soon the canker of self-indulgence and irresponsibility shows up as we read between the lines. The petty triumphs of the billiard and card-table take the place of high ambitions and worthy emulations, and he who should have been master of his fate quickly exhibits himself the slave of his passions. One thing only was fortunate in the miserable business. Shirley by his comparatively early death was spared the sorrow of seeing the wreckage of a life in which his hopes were centred, the rapid ruin of one on whom his affection had been so freely lavished. And we cannot but be thankful that he was

## THE DIARY (1865)

never destined to peruse those once white pages, now spotted with the miserable record of a wasted life.

But this is anticipating. Now, in 1865, all was bright with promise. From Shirley's diary for this year, the first of those which have escaped the general destruction, we learn that the tide of his life was running strong and vigorously. The days are punctuated with "work for *Punch*," "work for *Home News*," "work for the *Illustrated*," "work for the *G.M.*" (*Gentleman's Magazine*), "work for the *Era*." Everything is subordinated to this. Here was a man, if ever there was one, who worked with no faltering.

That he enjoyed is equally evident. Just as he threw his whole soul into his work when he was at it, so too, when he could lay it aside, he threw his whole soul into his pleasures and the pleasures of others.

There was his dinner table, which, like Crabbe Robinson, he "diarized," making diagrams and placing the diners' names in the order in which they sat round his hospitable board. And there were other people's dinner-tables which he diarized in the same way, with shrewd and humorous notes of the guests added below.

By the time this first of the diaries, which has escaped, was written, it had pleased him to discover in himself a likeness to the greatest of all diarists, and it amused him to play at being a modern edition of his great prototype. Here are a few examples which will show him at the game:—

On *Jan. 27th*, 1869, "Bessy Dickens came to ask us to sup on sprats and tripe on Friday. That reads a olly Pepysian entry."

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

On *Jan. 30th*. "To-day did I, Samuel Pepys, drawing mine own cheque on mine own banker, pay my assurance, out of mine own savings. But this leaves me scant and I must get more."

On *August 18th, 1869*, during a holiday in Wales, "Began to smoke Latakia, and much liking it, stick to my pipe all through the tour, and shall, I think, continue it, for it's cheap. I spend much money on weeds. This Mr. Pepys notes with a solemnity worthy of the occasion."

Again, Mrs. Shirley Brooks had insisted on his investing in the velvet coat, which he afterwards affected, and on Feb. 12th, 1871, he wrote, "Matthews, Torie and Jessy called, and Mr. Pepys exhibited himself in his new velvets which methought did much content them."

And on *April 4th, 1871*, "Elliott & Fry, photographers (where C. Keene works at *his* art), having been asked by several for a better picture of Mr. Pepys, request him to sit again. He proposes to oblige them."

That is, of course, a small matter, but characteristic of a man who loved conceits and dwelt much with fancies.

Glancing through this diary again we catch vivid glimpses of celebrities of the day with whom he is brought in contact. Here are a few casual references:

Sir A. Duff-Gordon—"he is a good talker and very wide-awake."

Fechter—"he underplayed *Robert Macaire*, trying to be a gentleman, but there was some fine by-play."

Marochetti—"whose bust of W. M. T. I do not think *frappant*, but it grows on you."

Mr. Justice Shee—"no good stories; *working* lawyers are better than those who have reached Olympus; nevertheless told me one about Mr. Justice

## ALL SORTS AND CONDITIONS

Williams, a colleague of Brougham's, 'who blew up an attorney who would make him call witnesses and thereby hung his client. "D—n you, go home, sell your puny chattels, cut your throat, and when you meet your client in hell, apologise to him, d—n you.'"

Arthur Lewis—at whose house "good music . . . excellent supper, fine pictures, everybody there and do as you like."

Frith—"who has done all that can be done with his great picture of the Prince of Wales's marriage, when a painter dares not do as Rubens did."

Millais—"whose picture of a Roman taking leave of a British girl is one of the finest things I ever saw. The reality of love and grief nearly made me cry, and I am not hydraulic generally."

Lord Egmont—"was at Trafalgar, not otherwise a remarkable lord."

Sam. Warren—"told some good law stories and imitates well."

Dr. John Spurgin—"who has had 20 children and won E.'s heart by his kindly discourse on such creatures."

Mrs. Lynn Linton—"read and liked her novel, "Grasp your Nettle."

Jeffreson—"the best American actor I have seen. . . . Repose, ease and absence of all trick."

Landseer—"talked much, but wants his innings to himself."

Sterndale Bennett—"always glad to see *him*."

Sutherland Edwards—"like him much."

From which we gather that he rubbed shoulders with men and women of all sorts and conditions, keeping eyes and ears open for anything worthy of record. But this is the mere froth of the diaries. They will yield much of more solid interest as we proceed with the consecutive narrative.



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

Amongst Shirley's intimates at this time was the late Dean Hole, who speaks in his "Memories" of "Brooks's quick, brilliant humour." For some reason or another, Reginald and Cecil, Shirley's two sons, had not yet been christened, although the one was just over, the other just under, ten years of age. At the beginning of this year a decision was come to to remedy the omission. Dean Hole was present and wrote as follows :—

" I went, on Shirley's invitation, to the christening of his children, and Mark Lemon was there as one of the sponsors. Some of our friends professed to regard this arrangement with horror and indignation. They solemnly assured the father of the babe that they saw through his diabolical intentions ; that all London, including the suburbs, was crying shame upon him ; and that, after anxious deliberation, they thought it their duty to lay an information before the magistrates, and to demand the interference of the police. It was evident, they said, that in engaging *Mr. Punch* as a godfather—*Punch*, who habitually and daily assaulted babies, beat them about the head with a stick, and dashed them down upon the stones of the street—he, Shirley Brooks, was bent upon infanticide, and that they were unable in consequence to sleep in their beds, terrified as they were by previsions of one, whom they had so dearly loved, appearing as Brooks, murderer, in Madame Tussaud's Chamber of Horrors !

" All things, nevertheless, were done with due reverence. . . ."

One is glad if this were so, for from Shirley's diary I am bound to confess a very different impression is left on the mind, and I cannot but think that in later

## A CURIOUS CHRISTENING

years he would have hesitated at rounding off so serious an occasion with such callous indifference to its real significance as is shown in his own account. If the thing were to be done at all, and meant anything other than the perfunctory performance of a meaningless rite, surely something better than plenty of champagne, a pantomime to follow, supper at the "Bedford" and home at half-past twelve, could have been devised to impress the solemnity of the occasion on the "young Christians!"

Charles Knight and Fred Evans stood as sponsors for Reginald. Mr. Matthews (of Messrs. Grindlay's), Robert Cooke and Mrs. Lemon (not Mark Lemon, as the Dean had it) for Cecil.

Here is Shirley's account :—

"Hole came late, but was present during most of the ceremony. R. was nervous and bit his lip. Cecil grave, but inclined to be comic. . . . Afterwards to the 'Bedford.' There we lunched in the 'Dryden.' . . . The feast went merrily. I turned on plenty of champagne. Charles Knight made a very nice speech to the health of the children, whom 'he would not call the Christians of the hour.' Afterwards E. and I and the young Christians went to see . . . 'Hop o' my Thumb' at Drury Lane. . . . Back to 'Bedford' to supper. . . . Home about  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 12. So all went well. . . . And there was the end of the christening. D.G."

Certainly the levity of the thing makes one shudder. At the same time we should not perhaps judge Shirley too harshly. The atmosphere in which he lived was not a religious one. More, the Church of England herself was, fifty years ago, lax and undisciplined in her

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

ceremonial observances. The Oxford movement had not yet resulted in the seemliness of ceremonial which is now happily so marked a feature, not only of High Anglican but also of Evangelical churches. Indeed, I am reminded that in those days it was quite the fashion after the even more solemn ceremony of Confirmation to hold what were called "Confirmation Balls," at which the girls would appear in their white dresses and dance until the day was young again! That is happily repugnant to present-day feelings, and Shirley should perhaps hardly be blamed for a laxness, the responsibility for which rested on other shoulders.

Again we turn over the pages of the neatly-written diary and catch vivid glimpses of the man and his surroundings.

On the first day of January he reviews the pecuniary results of the past year.

"Looking at my book, I find that I took earnings in hard cash in 1864 . . . £677 from *Punch* and other things. In all, with *Punch*, £821. Other earnings, which do not come to me, and £50 unpaid, make my work amount to £1,034 16s.

"Now this is not a sufficient advance on what I have done in previous years. The novel ought to have been completed, and I have had advances on that, all of which, assurance business included, must, D.V., be settled in 1865. May I have health, brains, and perseverance therefor."

"*Jan. 4th.*

"E. [Mrs. Brooks] and the children to party at Ansdell's\*—juvenile—everything capital. Our kids

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\* Richard Ansdell, the well-known animal painter.

## “ PALL MALL GAZETTE ”

much admired—specially Pig [Cecil], who was dancing with little Miss Millais. ‘ There go art and literature,’ said somebody.”

On Jan. 5th he puts it on record that he has written his first “ London Letter ” for the *Bristol Mirror*, signing himself “ A Templar.”\* This he continued to contribute weekly until October, no slight addition to his already voluminous output.

“ Jan. 11th.

“ E. said to-night that she ‘ had been happier for the last year than ever in her life, and could not desire to be more happy.’ ”

“ Jan. 14th.

“ Telegram from M(ark) L(emon), who is ill, and I had to edit *P(unch)* P(ocket-Book), so at and about that all day.”

“ Feb. 7th.

“ The first number of the *Pall Mall Gazette* appeared ; walked about in the wet mud till I got it.

“ Read *Gazette* aforesaid, which is said to be Smith’s of the *Cornhill*, Trollope, Higgins (J. O.), Hannay, Helps, in it. Fearfully dull.”

“ Feb. 8th.

“ Shall I write down that, being in admirable health, and perfectly sober, *mens sana in*, etc., it came, like a flash across me that I am but 50—that I ought to have more years *of work* before than behind me (for what was I really doing 20 years ago, 1845 ?), and that I ought to feel that I am beginning a new era ? I write it—and it will bear rough handling better than most *impressions*. Yet, the less we think subjectively, the better—I believe. Look at work and do it.”

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\* A *nom de plume* suggested by his working chambers, which were now at 5 Paper Buildings, Temple.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

“ I did not wish, after abandoning stage writing so long, and making another kind of reputation, to return with an adaptation of a sensation novel, so I asked high terms, and the thing rode off, B. Webster saying that his son was doing or would do the thing.”

On May 24th he takes one of his rare “ whole holidays.”

“ At  $\frac{1}{2}$  p. 10 with the Friths to Windsor. White Hart. To the Castle, where Frith got at Mr. Seabrook, the Inspector, who very kindly took us over every interesting part. I nor E. had been there before, and I was hugely delighted. I had no idea of the splendour and art-wealth of the place—it was worth going to see the Vandykes. We saw places into which the world is not allowed to go—Prince Consort’s armoury (bullet that killed Nelson, and no end of relics), and the Gainsborough room with its gems, into which the Q. does not care that anybody shall be taken. Also nuptial and Lucina bowers of the Princesses—rooms rich but small. The corridor is glorious. I should like a week of free range in the place. Then we had 5 basins of mock turtle at a confectioner’s, and smoked till the Yateses, Austin,\* and Parkinson came. Then two carriages—one with two horses and postillion held, on box, the Lords Brooks and Yates, the Hon. Mesdames Brooks and Yates, Sir W. P. Frith and Cavalier Austin. To Burnham Beeches, where I have been once before. Wandered, and then to Stoke, to see the Elegy Church, and Gray’s tomb. Home by 6 and dined at the hotel.”

So much, for the moment, of transient matters dealt with in the diary. We must now turn to a matter of

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\* The present poet-laureate.

## ABRAHAM LINCOLN

history, upon which this little volume throws a light that has hitherto been lacking.

On April 14th of this year (1865), Abraham Lincoln was foully assassinated. During the four preceding years *Punch* had assumed what one cannot but describe as an exceedingly offensive attitude towards America, North and South alike. No opportunity had been missed of vaunting the superiority of England and things English over America and things American. Both parties in the Civil War had provoked his bitterest satire, his uncompromising hostility. And Shirley had been one of the worst offenders. In 1861 he had written "The National Hymn of the Confederate States," with the insulting refrain—

"Rule Slaveownia, Slaveownia rules, and raves  
Christians ever, ever, ever shall be slaves."

This he had followed in 1862 with "An American Lyric to Abraham Lincoln, on his demand for 300,000 men," which ran as follows :—

"We're coming, Father Abraäm, we're coming all along,  
But don't you think you're coming it yourself a little strong ?  
Three hundred thousand might be called a pretty tidy figure,  
We've nearly sent you white enough, why don't you take the  
nigger ?

"Consider, Father Abraäm, and give the thing a thought,  
This war has just attained four times the longitude it ought ;  
And all the bills at Ninety Days as you have drawn so free  
Have been dishonoured, Abraäm, as punctual as could be.

"We've fought, old Father Abraäm, and fought uncommon bold,  
And gained amazing victories, or so at least we're told ;  
And having whipped the rebels for a twelvemonth and a day,  
We nearly found 'em liquoring in Washington in May.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

“ Now really, Father Abraäm, this here's the extra ounce,  
And we are almost sick, you see, of such almighty bounce ;  
We ain't afraid of being killed at proper times and seasons,  
But it's aggravating to be killed for Mac's\* strategic reasons.

“ If you'd be so obliging, Father Abraäm, as to write  
To any foreign potentate, and put the thing polite,  
And make him loan a general as knows the way to lead,  
We'd come and list, Jerusalem and snakes ! we would indeed.

“ But as the matter stands, old Abe, we've this opinion, some,  
If you say Come, as citizens of course we're bound to come,  
But then we want to win, you see ; if Strategy prevents,  
We wish you'd use the nigger for these here experiments.

“ Hereditary bondsman, he should just be made to know  
He'd convenience us uncommon if he'd take and strike a blow.  
The man as will not fight for freedom isn't worth a cuss,  
And it's better using niggers up than citizens like us.

“ So, Father Abraäm, if you please, in this here game of chess,  
You'd better take the black men against the white, I guess,  
And if you work the niggers off before Rebellion's slain,  
Which surely ain't respectable,—apply to us again.”

Later, when General Beauregard declared, in his proclamation to the South, that “ unborn generations would rise up and call them blessed,” *Punch* had caustically observed that, with proverbial inaccuracy, the reporters had omitted the general's concluding word, “ rascals ! ”

These are but samples of what had been the practice of *Punch* during those terrible years during which a great nation, bound to England by the closest ties, had been in the awful throes of a mortal tragedy.

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\* McClellan

## “ PUNCH'S ” GREAT RECANTATION

It was the time for sympathy, not for satire. But *Punch* had made it the time for one of his great mistakes.

And now came the appalling news that the great President, just when the hour of his triumph had struck, was untimely dead at the hands of an assassin. Then were men's eyes opened to the real splendour of the man's character, the difficulty and glory of his achievement. It was a great opportunity for *Punch* to show of what mettle he was made, and he seized it. After all he was an honourable hunchback, and did not subscribe to that astounding dictum of Emerson's that “ no sensible person ever made an apology.” The thing must be done handsomely or not at all, and certainly his recantation was the amplest imaginable. “ It was,” says Ollier in his “ History of the United States,” “ a recantation perhaps the most extraordinary that has ever appeared in print.” And certainly *Punch* did not spare himself. Retracting and self-abasement could surely not have been more complete. The words in which the recantation was made no doubt were rough and rugged, but they were instinct with generous shame and honest repentance. A great wrong had been done. A complete recantation must be made, and Mark Lemon evinced high moral courage in not shrinking from the responsibility. It was almost worth while to have been wrong to have the opportunity of making so honourable an *amende*.

I have not space for more than the first six stanzas of a set of verses which should be turned up in the pages of *Punch* and read in their entirety.



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

“ ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

“ FOULLY ASSASSINATED APRIL 14TH, 1865.

“ *You* lay a wreath on murdered Lincoln’s bier,  
    *You*, who with mocking pencil went to trace,  
Broad for the self-complacent British sneer,  
    His length of shambling limb, his furrowed face.

“ His gaunt, gnarled hands, his unkempt, bristling hair,  
    His garb uncouth, his bearing ill at ease,  
His lack of all we prize as *debonair*,  
    Of power or will to shine, of art to please.

“ *You*, whose smart pen backed up the pencil’s laugh,  
    Judging each step as though the way were plain :  
Reckless, so it could point its paragraph,  
    Of chief’s perplexity, or people’s pain.

“ Beside this corpse, that bears for winding-sheet  
    The Stars and Stripes he lived to rear anew,  
Between the mourners at his head and feet,  
    Say, scurril-jester, is there room for *you* ?

\* \* \*

“ Yes, he had lived to shame me from my sneer,  
    To lame my pencil, and confute my pen—  
To make me own this hind of princes peer,  
    This rail-splitter a true-born king of men.

“ My shallow judgment I had learnt to rue,  
    Noting how to occasion’s height he rose,  
How his quaint wit, made home-truth seem more true,  
    How, iron-like, his temper grew by blows.”

In America the verses, accompanying as they did Tenniel’s noble cartoon of “ Britannia Sympathising with Columbia,” created a profound impression. One writer even went so far as to declare that they were largely instrumental in preventing the war between America and England which seemed imminent. Overwrought nerves had been strained almost to snapping



*By kind permission of the Proprietors of "Punch."*

**BRITANNIA SYMPATHIZES WITH COLUMBIA**

**"Punch," May 6, 1865**



## “ PUNCH'S ” GREAT RECANTATION

point by the hostile criticism of the sad-faced, loose-limbed Yankee, whom America had learned to look on as her saviour. And it wanted but a little more to precipitate a catastrophe at which the world would have stood aghast—a sorry commentary on the boasted civilization and humanity of the nineteenth century. Happily it was averted, and who shall say what part was played by *Punch's* prompt and courageous atonement? The sincerity, manliness, sympathy, and, above all, the humility of the verses spoke straight to the heart of a great nation, and soothed a wound which should never have been opened and which constant teasing had kept cruelly at the raw. Since that time *Punch* has, whilst reserving to himself the right of laughing at our cousins' foibles as at our own, steadily used his great influence for conciliation and kindly feeling, and has been instant in removing those misunderstandings which never should be allowed to exist between nations so nearly related by blood, and united at their best by a common noble ideal.

The verses appeared on May 6th, and were as much discussed in England as in America. Here, I regret to say, they by no means met with universal approval. Indeed, as we shall see, the *Punch* staff was itself divided on the matter. Soon the quidnuncs were hard at work to discover their authorship. Some said they were Shirley's; others that they were Tom Taylor's; others that they were Alfred Tennyson's! But *Mr. Punch's* Cabinet kept its own counsel, and, so far as the public was concerned, the question remained unanswered.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

Thirty years later came Mr. Spielmann's "History of *Punch*," in which the matter was of necessity dealt with, and there the verses were attributed to Shirley Brooks. Later the question was raised in the pages of *Notes and Queries* by Mr. A. J. Edmunds, of "The Historical Society of Pennsylvania," and their attribution to Tennyson again mentioned! This was, of course, ridiculous, and in reply they were once more nailed to the mast as the work of Shirley Brooks. So the matter rested, until the writing of this biography became my business. Then a doubt arose in my mind, for I found that they had not been included in the selection from Shirley's *Punch* verse, published after his death under the title of "Wit and Humour." This was the more surprising since much of a very inferior nature was there to be found. In a fortunate moment I received a letter from Mr. George Dunlop, of the *Kilmarnock Standard*, an Abraham Lincoln enthusiast of many years' standing, in which he informed me that an edition of the letters and speeches of the great President was now being prepared in America, in which allusion would be made to the episode and the verses attributed to Tom Taylor, and would I, as Shirley's biographer, clear the matter up?

Thereupon the thing assumed a new importance. Mere assertion was not enough. Direct evidence was essential. But where to get it?

Then a curious thing happened. Immediately after receiving Mr. Dunlop's communication, there came into my hands quite unexpectedly Shirley's

## “ PUNCH ” EATS HUMBLE PIE

diary for 1865, the very year that was wanted, picked up by the veriest chance in the shop of a Brighton bookseller! Of course there was no certainty even then that there would be any reference to the matter in its pages. Indeed, if the verses were his, they would after all be only in the ordinary course of his work, and, if they were not, well! they were only in the course of somebody else's, and as likely as not would call for no special mention. But, as I turned the pages, hope ran high. On Feb. 15th he recorded “ *D.P.P.*” (Dined with the *Punch* People), “ Stood up for the Federals and their abolition of slavery, but the current of feeling in society, just now, is all against them, even to unfairness.”

That was so far satisfactory as showing that Shirley was in sympathy with the North, but it was not enough.

What would the record for May have to say? I confess to some considerable excitement as I turned the pages. There was nothing on May 6th, the date of the appearance of the verses, nor on the 7th, 8th, or 9th. My last hope was the date of the next *Punch* dinner, May 10th. Imagine my feelings when I turned to that date and read:—

“ D(ined) *Punch*, all there. Let out my views against some verses on Lincoln in which T. T.\* had not only made *P.* eat umbles pie but swallow dish and all. P. L.† and J. T.‡ with me.”

So there was the answer to the burning question in Shirley's own handwriting. So far indeed from being

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\* Tom Taylor.

† Percival Leigh.

‡ John Tenniel.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

the writer of the verses, he most heartily condemned their publication. In that case I find my man not on the side of the angels. He was, however, sound in his allegiance to the North and anti-slavery, for he recorded on the same day :—

“ Johnston has surrendered, and, thank God, the American war is over, and Slavery is abolished. I rejoice that no bravery of the South ever led me to waver in my hope and belief that the North would win.”

And the next day in his *Bristol Times* letter :—

“ Everybody must rejoice that the American war is virtually at an end. Johnston has now surrendered, and what remnants of Confederate armies may be left will scarcely be insane enough to incur the perils of a hopeless resistance. We cannot say that there is peace, but there is an end of war. And slavery is abolished. We had all hoped to see this abolition worked out peaceably, and by the shedding of treasure instead of blood, but Mars, not Mammon, was to be the presiding deity, and frightful the price has been. It is paid, however, and we can no longer play the Pharisee, and taunt our American brother with our superior virtue. The subject does not belong to my letter, but it is one which no man can help speaking of. I will simply add that I hear a general expression of satisfaction that the assassin of President Lincoln has been shot and thrown away, instead of being made the centre of a scene. Virginia will probably change the motto he polluted.”

That is all very well, but I confess I should have been better pleased to find him crying “ Peccavi ” with Mark Lemon and Tom Taylor, and more generous in his recognition of him of whom Whittier wrote :—

## ABRAHAM LINCOLN

“ A Great and Providential Man. The world has seen few like him ! ”

A month later there is another entry which shows that the verses were still being discussed, and that the mis-statement was already on its way, which has now, after forty years, been run to earth, and we may hope finally disposed of.

“ *June 10th.*

“ Letter from Fred Sabine. . . . They attribute the *Punch* verses on Lincoln to me, a mistake whereof, as I would be stealing Kudos else, I must disabuse them.”

So much for Shirley's own written evidence which fell so opportunely into my hands.

Later Mr. Silver at my request looked up his record of the aforesaid *Punch* dinner, and found the following :—

“ Shirley protests against Tom Taylor's lines on Lincoln. ‘ *Punch* has not been blind and shallow,’ he declared indignantly, ‘ and even if it had, we ought not to own it. Would you have written the lines, Leigh ? ’

“ ‘ I ! No, I should think not indeed,’ says Leigh.

“ Thereupon Mark Lemon totally disagrees with them both.

“ ‘ The avowal,’ he says, ‘ that we have been a bit mistaken is manly and just.’ ”

No doubt, the *Punch* people, in common with many others, had mistrusted Lincoln because of his first declaring that he would throw over the Slave question if thereby he could maintain the Union, and afterwards asserting that it was Slavery alone which had caused



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

the war and its abolition that alone could finish it. But they had not gauged the appalling difficulty of the situation, which could only be judged as a whole, and not by what this or that man may have said at one time or another during the long-drawn-out and bitter controversy.

## CHAPTER XIV

1865 (*continued*) and 1866—Health—Earnings—Work—The Leigh Murray Benefit—At Scarborough with the Friths—*Punch's* "Table Talk"—Death of Lord Palmerston—The Agnews—Lectures at Oswestry—The Year's Earnings—Letters to Mr. and Mrs. Frith—The Censorship of Plays—Artemus Ward—Letters to Percival Leigh—*Punch's* Golden Wedding—Governor Eyre—Boulogne—Dieppe—C. H. Bennett—Parting Kick to 1866.



AY, with its treacherous winds and hot sun, was barely over when Shirley was again laid up with a severe attack of gout, and wrote in his diary :—

"Have had solemn palaver with Duplex\* on matters which affect the nearest, and he says that on three conditions he will assure me 15 years of nerves as they ought to be — which means *a deal*. The terms are :—

1. Exercise, at least 6 miles a day.
2. Only one wine at a time.
3. No tobacco.

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\* His doctor.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

The last item is a severe one, as I have got into the habit so much. But I am sure that he is right, and I have been so miserable that it would be absurd not to enter on the new course. I make no pledge, on principle, but I will try."

He was burning the candle at both ends, and taking but little healthy recreation. As literary work increased, so did the social exigencies of life. Dinner parties, first nights at the theatre, late hours, put the finishing touch to long spells of arduous work, and exhausted nerves cried out, now for stimulants, now for narcotics.

Bohemia was inhabited by Bohemians in those days, and Shirley was a true native. Now it has been captured by men whose tastes and habits have been formed at the public schools, or who at least have had their three years at Oxford or Cambridge. The difference is clearly put in a note which Sir Francis Burnand has kindly sent to me :—

"I find it difficult," he writes, "to remember anything concerning Shirley Brooks that would be of general interest. As Eton boys say, 'I knew him at home,' but, even socially, he belonged to a previous generation of literary men, journalists and theatrical professionals which has very little in common with those of my own time and standing. Or it may have been that socially I myself had very little in common with them. Put it which way you will, certainly the habits and manners of Shirley and his contemporaries were not congenial to me. Shirley belonged to that period when journalism generally and the profession of lighter literature meant that no matter of business or pleasure could be discussed without it being made,

## BOHEMIA

at any time of the day or night, 'an excuse for a glass.' It was the same with most of Shirley's *compères* at that time, the notable exception being Tom Taylor, who, as a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, had been associated with other men and other manners. Thackeray also was an exception in spite of his appreciation of Bohemia. But it was to the First Form Upper Remove in the Bohemian Public Schools that he belonged. Certainly within my recollection a considerable majority of the journalists and 'literary men' of my earlier times were decidedly convivial, and conviviality entered largely into their method of working. Like George Augustus Sala, sometimes his friend and sometimes his enemy, Shirley Brooks had 'been through the mill,' which was decidedly not a *water-mill*, and their sentiments were those of Dick Swiveller, who, as Chairman of the Glorious Apollos, proposed that 'we might never want a friend or a bottle to give him.' They were not drunkards: they were not Teetotallers: they were simply Boozers. Occasionally fuddled and muddled, but rarely so far as to find Mr. Bob Sawyer's remedy essential to the regaining their ordinary common sense."

That puts the case in a nutshell and needs little comment. Other days, other manners, and it is not for us to judge how far circumstances and temperament were excuses for continued self-indulgence. For there is no blinking the fact that the serious warning Shirley had received from his doctor had but little effect. Indeed, the imperative order "no tobacco" was actually but two days old when we find him dallying with the forbidden thing and writing in his diary:—

"Had one cigar to comfort me, being Saturday night, but was happy to find that it did not make me happy.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

This entry may read to me frivolous hereafter, but I have smoked so very much, and thought so much about it, and been so unhappy if I missed my weed, that I am glad to feel that I can emancipate myself, if I like."

That would have been all very satisfactory, if it had had no sequel, but when we find him recording in the following month that he is "smoking hard again," we guess that he has ceased to fight. Either circumstances are too strong for him, or he is what Ward Beecher called "a barrel without hoops, which is bound to tumble to pieces."

But, if he had ceased to fight against these dangerous habits, he certainly had not ceased, and never did till his life's end cease, to work with might and main. *Punch* and the *Illustrated London News* were now between them paying him about eight hundred a year. And his editorship of *Home News*, his work on the *Bristol Mirror*, his plays and his novels, together with sporadic contributions to other periodicals must have brought two or three hundreds more. That meant work of a very arduous nature, and it is not for us who have never done half so much to judge him too hardly for whipping his jaded energies up to the performance of the tasks which he had undertaken, and which it was his duty to perform to the best of his ability. Foolish and short-sighted he may have been, but journalism is a hard mistress, and is not slow to discard the servant who shows signs of failing. And expenses were rapidly increasing. There was the house in Kent Terrace to keep up, and there were the two boys to be

## THE LEIGH MURRAY BENEFIT

educated. There were dinner parties to be given and a constantly enlarging circle of acquaintances to be entertained one way or another. There were summer holidays to be spent abroad or at the seaside, and, as we have seen, there were many cigars to be smoked and no inconsiderable quantity of wine to be consumed. There was his old father to be provided for, and there were innumerable friends and relations who sponged upon him to an unconscionable extent. And these things could not be paid for unless the tired brain was kept at its busiest, the willing heart strained to the point of exhaustion.

Nor were the imperative calls of his employers the only drain upon his energies. Overworked as he was, he could always find time to do a good turn for his friends. To take one example, on June the 27th we find him contributing a "scene" to be enacted by the beneficiaries at the benefit of the Leigh Murrays at Drury Lane—a benefit at which, it is interesting after forty years to remember, Charles Santley, still happily with us, was one of the notable performers. Unable to be present himself, because he was taking "medicine," Shirley records :—

"Sent E. and E. to Drury Lane, to Leigh Murray's benefit. They returned with a glowing account of the effect of the scene—the house in tears, and waving wipes."

The "scene" is so charming an example of his graceful verse that I make no apology for rescuing it from oblivion.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

*Enter* MRS. LEIGH MURRAY.

*Mrs. L. M.* When the full heart is fullest lips are dumb,  
For words turn traitors and refuse to come,  
And if I borrow words to tell our tale  
'Tis only that I feared my own might fail :  
For this great kindness, this most generous  
aid,  
Thanks heaped on thanks must leave our  
debt unpaid.  
Yet *how* to thank you ? Should the actor's  
wife  
Tell you the story of his saddened life :  
Of prostrate energy, of wearying pain,  
Of hope renewed, but to be crushed again :  
Tell how the Artist sighed to tread once  
more  
The boards he loved—the drama's haunted  
floor :  
Tell how the Husband burned to break the  
spell  
And share Life's Battle (once he fought it  
well),  
And how, with sickening heart, he day by  
day  
And month by month " his chamber's  
prisoner " lay ?  
This I *could* tell. But to awake the tear  
Were poor requital of your presence here ;  
Nor would I stand with drooping looks and  
sad,  
When you come round us but to make us  
glad.  
Believe but this—that suffering, grief, and  
care  
Have sometimes seemed beyond what he  
could bear,

## THE LEIGH MURRAY BENEFIT

And *this*—our troubles, which like night-birds prey,  
Scared by your hands and voices, flee away.  
Fitter than mournful story, to my mind,  
Were some brief interlude of cheerier kind,  
Some half dramatic trifle to beguile  
Each friendly face of an indulgent smile,  
And yet to be no fiction. In the gloom  
And the long silence of the shaded room  
His thoughts have oft recalled triumphant  
nights,

The crowded theatre, the glowing lights,  
The new-drawn character, the certain hit,  
The storm of passion and the fence of wit ;  
And one whose love and duty bade her  
strive

To keep the moment's cheerfulness alive,  
To make him mirthful answer would essay,  
Something like what we thought to say  
to-day.

Will you forgive such trespass on your time,  
And hear us talk—as no one talks—in  
rhyme ?

If so, a moment's pardon while I bring  
Our convalescent on—he's near the wing.

*Brings MR. LEIGH MURRAY forward. He is about  
to speak.*

*lrs. L. M.* Speak if you will, nor such an impulse  
stem,

*lrs. L. M.* Yet I have told them what we owe to them.  
You have not told them, as I mean to do,  
One hundredth part of what I owe to you.

*lrs. L. M.* Silence this instant, or I go P.S.,  
And leave you to conclude. Obedient ?

*lrs. L. M.* Yes.

Yet, if they only knew——



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

- Mrs. L. M.* I only know  
That if I hear a word of that, I go.
- Mr. L. M.* I'm dumb.
- Mrs. L. M.* No, no ; you need not look so meek ;  
On your behalf I've promised you shall  
speak.
- Mr. L. M.* Would I had words to thank them, one  
and all.
- Mrs. L. M.* Not yet. Attend to me. Do you recall  
The conversation when I asked you where  
You coveted to go for change of air ?
- Mr. L. M.* I think so. I remarked, my dear, that you  
Surveyed the world from China to Peru.
- Mrs. L. M.* Answer as you did then. Come, choose  
your clime.
- Mr. L. M.* Where have I not been, madam, in my  
time ?  
Through Cyprus some who're here have  
seen me walk,  
And in Verona's ball-room heard me talk.
- Mrs. L. M.* Would you like Paris ?
- Mr. L. M.* There I've borne my part ;  
Surely you don't forget "The Marble  
Heart."
- Mrs. L. M.* Rome ?
- Mr. L. M.* I've been there as *Antony*, you know.
- Mrs. L. M.* Sweden ?
- Mr. L. M.* I've reigned there.
- Mrs. L. M.* What's that island—Oh !  
Mauritius—will that suit you, o'er the  
wave ?
- Mr. L. M.* 'Twas there I fought a Creole for a slave.
- Mrs. L. M.* Then be content with going out of town—  
Some quiet village, near some breezy  
down—  
Say Chobham.

## THE LEIGH MURRAY BENEFIT

*Mr. L. M.* I've been there. Though now he's tamer,  
Some persons may remember *Captain*  
*Damer.*

*Mrs. L. M.* Bath's pleasant.

*Mr. L. M.* *Captain Absolute* can tell  
That he was quartered there and liked it  
well.

*Mrs. L. M.* My list is done. To make it more, I fear  
I must go home and fetch the *Gazetteer.*

*Mr. L. M.* Mine is not half exhausted—yet I trust  
To make it longer.

*Mrs. L. M.* And you shall and must,  
Thanks to the generous friends who've  
cleared our way,  
To sunny lands where southern breezes  
play,  
Where, health restored, and life in every  
vein,

I pray to hear "Richard's himself again."  
*Mr. L. M.* Now I *must* speak. My words shall be  
but few.

(*To the audience.*)

Let me but own my pleasant debt to  
*you.*

My ship is nobly launched. A Royal  
hand

Hath kindly deigned to help it from the  
sand.

Your hands have urged it on, and let me  
say,

Those of my own dear craft have given it  
way.

It floats. Farewell! A prosperous  
voyage or not,

God bless you! *This* can never be forgot.

(*Exeunt.*)

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

Henry Leigh Murray, round whom and his clever wife Shirley and many other friends had rallied in the hour of sickness and misfortune, a sound and painstaking actor, who had done good work with Macready and Helen Faucit (Lady Martin), was destined to survive his benefit but a few years. His wife, a clever actress in domestic comedy, was the daughter of Henry Lee, author of "Throw Physic to the Dogs."

In August of this year Shirley and his wife were the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Frith at Scarborough. Others of the party were Mr. J. C. Parkinson, who had just returned from the historic trip of the *Great Eastern*, when the great Atlantic cable had snapped in mid-ocean, Horace Mayhew, the Sotherns, W. O'Neil, and the Yateses. Mr. Parkinson tells me that, notwithstanding his absence from London, Shirley always wore a top hat and a frock coat and could hardly be induced to take any exercise. He preferred to spend his time indoors and "to surround himself with what appeared to be every newspaper published, which he skimmed with rapidity and never seemed to tire of." One amusement which he really enjoyed was the "circus," which the party much affected and at which "command" performances were given for their amusement. Amongst their acquaintances was a certain sprig of nobility, of late years holding high office in the House of Commons, whose roving eye fell upon the circus-proprietor's pretty daughter. One night the noble father of the young aristocrat and the circus-proprietor turned up in great perturbation at the Friths' lodgings. The girl had gone off and so had

## AN ELOPEMENT AND A RESCUE

the young sprig. Shirley and Mr. Frith at once started in pursuit and fortunately discovered the girl no further off than the railway station. Here a lurid picture was drawn of what would be her fate when her lover had tired of her, and she was brought back before much harm was done. Some time after Shirley received a charming letter from the lady, saying that, thanks to him, she was a happy wife and mother, and that she blessed him every day of her life.

Through the kindness of Mrs. Panton (Miss "Sissy" Frith), I am enabled to add to this record the following "Passages from a Diary of a Celebrated R.A., and of a Distinguished Author, with incidental notices of an 'Ornary Cuss' and Other Persons," written at the time by Shirley, and describing one day of the Scarborough visit. The "Harrow Boy" referred to is Mr. C. G. Frith. "Sarony" is of course the well-known photographer, of whom Shirley writes in a letter of this date: "Photography here is in all its *vulgarer* glory, and there is an artist, Sarony, who has built the splendidest place out of his profits; of course I have sat, *ecce signum*, but he has done better than this."

"7 a.m.—The Harrow Boy sets the household a good example. He rises, and throws himself into Latin, Greek, Algebra, and other branches of learning. His example is not followed, though his footsteps are, by the row he makes in going.

"7.30.—Various noises. Invitation to purchase herrings dominates everything.

"8.0.—Miss Frith goes out banging all the doors. Mr. Brooks remarks on the inside of his door that there

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

is no rest for the wicked and not much for the ungodly. He gets up.

“8.30.—The rest of the house is supposed to be rising.

“8.45.—Messrs. Frith, O’Neil, and Brooks meet at the Springs, and proceed to contradict each other on every given question. O’Neil declares the cold water to be refreshing, on which the other two accuse him of having taken too much brandy over night. Brooks says the waters are humbug, on which Frith declares that they cure all diseases of mind and body. O’Neil says that the day is hot. Frith replies that the thermometer has gone down. Brooks observes that none of the Scarborough thermometers are good for anything. O’Neil agrees with this, on which Brooks says that the one at Albion Road is from London, and a very good one. Frith says it was made at York and is good for nothing. O’Neil explains the Atlantic cable, to which explanation Frith replies that he hopes there is ham for breakfast, and Brooks wishes he had the *Leeds Mercury*. O’Neil buys a stick because he says it is going to rain. Frith quotes poetry. Brooks abuses the Spa and all the visitors. O’Neil again explains the Atlantic cable and goes away. The other two make faces at him, and after a quarrel which road they shall take, return to breakfast.

“9.15.—Mrs. Frith rebukes them for keeping breakfast waiting. Frith replies that it may wait, and—something else, but Brooks being a visitor has grace enough to be polite and declare that they have come back earlier than usual and that *they* were kept waiting yesterday. Mrs. Frith repays evil with good, and gives them an admirable breakfast. Mrs. Shirley repines because she has no letters from Oxford. Brooks is sulky because there is a piece of bone in his ham, and wishes that his wife had helped him to it that he might

## PASSAGES FROM A COMIC DIARY

have expressed his feelings. Frith reads letters at breakfast, and anathematises the various writers, who are defended by Mrs. Frith. Pearce\* gets on the window-sill and Miss Frith destroys the remaining peace of the meal by pretending to think that he will fall out. Brooks wishes that he could. The Harrow Boy fetches cigars. These calm Frith and Brooks, and their growls are temporarily exchanged for sweetness. They hope that the ladies will make out a pleasant day, but ingeniously defeat or evade every proposition for excursions or other enjoyments.

“ 10.—Frith and Brooks go into the drawing-room, take the best chairs and the last papers, and smoke benevolently, repeating their hopes that the ladies will enjoy themselves. Mrs. Shirley reads and abuses a novel. Miss Frith writes a letter mysteriously. Mrs. Frith orders dinner. (Bless her.)

“ 11.—Frith and Brooks, having smoked two cigars and read all the papers, have soda and brandy, and abuse O’Neil for not coming up with some plan for the day. Brooks declares that O’Neil can’t paint, and Frith alleges that he cut the Atlantic cable because the Captain would not give him a third bottle of Burgundy. The ladies defend O’Neil because he gave them peaches, which he asserted cost ninepence each, a statement derided by Frith and Brooks.

“ 11.30.—Mrs. Shirley and Miss Frith leave the house. Brooks says that he must write, and Frith talks of devoting himself to art. The former goes upstairs and reads a French novel, and the latter goes over to Sarony’s (because he can be seen from the windows to go there), but is *not* there when Brooks, having read the novel, goes over. They meet later on

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\* The dog, named after the well-known sporting Dorsetshire parson, who wrote under the pseudonym “ Idstone ” for *The Field*.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

the Esplanade, and each declares he has been sitting on one of the benches for an hour. They agree to say that they have been waiting to be photographed. When asked whether they have seen the negative, they reply in it! Brooks proposes to fish, and Frith says it is too rough. Frith proposes to sail, and Brooks says there is no wind.

" 12.30.—Frith and Brooks have more cigars to refresh them after their artistic and literary labours. They quote poetry alternately for half-an-hour, and Mrs. Frith privately wonders whether she could get presentations for them to the Earlswood Asylum.

" 1.—Cake and wine. Mrs. Shirley and Miss Frith came in, the former enraged because she could not bathe, the latter because she has had to speak to a 'cad' on the Spa. Frith remarks (from Burns) that 'a man's a man for a' that,' and that 'rank is but the guinea stamp.' Brooks quotes Dr. Watts with profane alterations. Frith sings a popular air of a pensive kind of the year 1835, and Brooks tells a story (thought to be untrue) about his recollections of 1821. After their athletic exercises they have more cigars. The ladies all read novels, and declare them idiotic. Mrs. Shirley begins to net, but diverging first into knitting and then into crochet, makes no great progress. Miss Frith reads a letter for the ninth time, and then tears it into very small pieces. Everybody condemns O'Neil for his unprincipled conduct in not coming up with some plan, and everybody asserts positively that he pledged himself to do so, but all disagree as to the hour he fixed.

" 1.30.—Frith and Brooks go out to the relief of the ladies. Brooks wishes, with a laudable curiosity, to go and see certain paintings which are being exhibited in the town, but Frith rancorously denounces the proposition, and offers to go to the circus. Brooks is

## SCARBOROUGH

abusive about mountebanks, and says he came here for air and not sawdust. They compromise by going to Theakstone's, where Brooks buys a map of Scarborough, which can be of no earthly use, and Frith takes elaborate particulars touching certain excursions on which he has not the remotest idea of going. They look into the Town Hall and wrangle over its date, which Brooks calls Queen Anne and Frith George the Second. At the entrance of a policeman they drop their voices and compliment him on a beastly old picture of Jackson's which Frith says is worthy of Salvator Rosa, and Brooks thinks is an early Rubens. The policeman sees them out, and looks at the *Hue and Cry* to ascertain whether they are described in that periodical. They are reduced to despair from utter nothingness of purpose when they meet O'Neil, who explains the Atlantic cable, and does not ask them into the 'Royal' to have drinks. They remark offensively on his meanness when he *does* ask them in, and they retort, still more offensively, that previously to going they are resolved to witness his departure for another and a hotter world. All three then lean against rails, and in a purely artistic spirit make observations on the ladies who go by struggling against the wind. Anecdotes occur to them, and they block up the pavement by getting into a group to recount these, and curse the inoffensive passengers for wanting to come by and thus interrupting a narrative. O'Neil abused for not having come to Albion Road, asserts, with frightful oaths, that he never had the least idea of doing so. He is invited to dinner by Frith, but surlily refuses, at which, when O'Neil has gone into his hotel, Brooks expresses satisfaction. Being asked why, he is unable to say, but rides off into general abuse of all connected with the Atlantic cable. Frith in a savagely contradictory spirit praises O'Neil until



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

Brooks admits that he has good points, when Frith retracts and proposes to go and see the artillery practice. Brooks is about to wish the artillery under fire which they would not like, when he remembers that he is a guest who is receiving (all things considered) tolerable hospitable entertainment, and gives an ungracious assent, in which Frith changes his mind, and they go home and have more cigars.

" 3.—The ladies mutiny and declare that they are never taken anywhere. Frith quotes poetry to the effect that woman's smile is sweetest at home, and Brooks cites the Scripture to show that she should be a 'stayer' there, but these agreements being utterly despised, the party, increased by additions, go out in a break and are frightfully bumped and covered with dust. (N.B.—For purposes of art this is described in a general way, but two such journeys were actually performed. On one occasion the party, about ten, went to Filey, and had a pigeon-pie, which was made of 'high' fragments of steak, and on the second the party, about seventeen, went to Hackness and had nothing except a lounge in a churchyard and a narrow escape from a spill.) But the excursion had a sensational character, and everybody, probably to annoy everybody else, was delighted. Brooks and Frith quoted poetry with much fluency, and to the intense satisfaction of their companions, though the latter are too delicate to give any sign of the gratification they must have experienced at the recitations.

" 4.—(If no excursion.) Frith and Brooks suddenly discover that it is a shame that the ladies should have no enjoyment, so take them out, and with curious alacrity put them into a bad carriage with a tired horse and a sulky driver, and send them along the dustiest road that can be selected. (N.B.—The ladies are speedily disgusted and come home and meditate

## SCARBOROUGH

several things to be said to the traitors, who, meantime, have gone to make a pleasant call, have seen pretty pictures, and eaten cool grapes.)

“ 4.50.—Frith and Brooks go to fetch the *Times*, and are indecorously frantic because it has been already fetched by some of the family. They think of buying another copy to read as they walk home, but Theakstone has not got one, so they are saved this folly. They go down on the Spa and find O’Neil, whom they vituperate for not being at home at work. He explains the Atlantic cable, and is called an ‘Ornary Cuss’ (Artemus Ward), and the other two are put into singular good humour by this display of their wit. They quarrel, however, as to which water should be taken before dinner, but Frith proposes to drink both, and quotes the ‘Meeting of the Waters’ so appropriately that Brooks is compelled to be polite, and wish that his host would trust more often to his excellent memory and less to his inferior originality. O’Neil is desired to come up in the evening for cards, on which he utters several insults and retires, saying that he will see about it. The others exchange confidences on his personal character.

“ 5.30.—Brooks and Frith come in and declare that they have walked eight miles. Brooks says that if he does not have some sherry he will go to the window and bellow that he is not mad, but that Frith is keeping him a prisoner to get his property. He gets sherry. The ladies complain of the bad carriage, and Frith, looking out and believing that it will rain next day, promises them a drive to-morrow, and declares that he has bespoken a conveyance. Brooks dresses for dinner by turning down his wristbands and Frith by pulling up his collars. The obituary in the *Times* is read and many good jokes are made on the names of the defunct, chiefly by Brooks, who is insulted for his

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

From Scarborough the Brookses proceeded to Scotland, whence Shirley wrote :—

S. B. TO MR. W. P. FRITH, R.A.\*

“ WOODFIELD,  
“ INVERNESS.

“ MY DEAR FRITH,

“ *Ici nous sommes.* Thanks for forwarding letters. I owe you a great heap of stamps, and shall have very great pleasure in paying you the compliment of continuing to owe them. The principal ornament of the hotel-room at Banavie (Benjamin Nevis) is the work by one Frith, R.A., representing somebody coming of age, and in our sitting-room the same artist is represented again by the girl warning a dog to behave himself. I wish you had been with us on this voyage, as the weather was perfect and the scenery (if you could appreciate it) came out strong. Curious animals on board, some very pretty faces included (if you could appreciate female loveliness), and some creditable ankles. It is as hot here as Scarborough, and there are Highland games going on ; so there is no peace for the wicked, and very little for the ungodly. I am sitting in a clatter and chatter. Excuse good spelling. I wish Sarony, the photographer, would send me a few photos of myself here, for distribution among the Highland aristocracy. We are among swells. Three dukes arrived last night—Manchester, Wellington, and the Duke of Fife, and we had some kind of prince with wopping blue eyes on board—Hesse, I think. Something better than your Leeds and Wakefield swells, eh ! but then we have no Royal Academicians. I hope, however, to see Phillip, R.A., to-day. He is much fêted by the resident gentry, I hear, which shows

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\* *Vide* Frith's "Reminiscences," Vol. III, p. 282.

## IN SCOTLAND

something like a respect for art, and is a proof that they really do not know what artists are.

“ Write us a letter, and tell me how you all get on ; has — corrected his proofs and his morals ? I wish you could see the tourists in the boats, they are lovely fun ; and their enthusiasm, when they have carefully read the guide-book and are quite sure that they are at the right place to begin yelling, is most delicious. I had opportunities of lying unto several with extempore legends, and I am happy to say that I availed myself thereof.

“ We shall be here for two or three days, I s’pose, and then to the Glen ; but this will be the last address.

“ Ever yours faithfully,

“ SHIRLEY BROOKS.”

Here is what he wrote from the same place to *Punch*. It is a good example of the way in which he turned into “ copy ” the ordinary and prosaic happenings of the day :—

“ DRUMNADROCHIT.

“ MY DEAR ‘ MR. PUNCH,’

“ My last despatch left me, or rather you, at the foot of Ben Nevis. For my own part, I could have remained there—when I say ‘ there,’ I mean, however, at a comfortable inn called after the Arms of him who was respectfully advised to beware of the day when the Lowlands should meet him in battle array—but *aliter visum*—and once more I had to rise at six in the morning. I like to sit in a chair when I eat my breakfast, and to-day I indulged this whim before embarking. While dispatching my modest meal (haddock, chop, ham and eggs, eggs plain, bramble jam, toast, marmalade, strong tea, and a dram), my eye fell—bother, both my eyes went up to an engraving of MR. FRITH’S celebrated picture—which depicts the ceremony of

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

gratulating a young heir, of other days, on his coming of age. You tell me that large numbers of your readers desire to know 'what your Valued Contributor is like to look at.' Let them procure that engraving, and in the face and figure of the graceful young Heir they will find a remarkable resemblance to myself. If I regret anything, it is that I was not also born to a mansion and estate, though your liberal appreciation of my genius makes this regret almost ungracious. I wish that MR. FRITH would paint the touching scene that occurred when you, manly tears half choking your utterance, presented me with the delightful villa and grounds, coachhouse and stables, and hot and cold water on the premises, to which I shall have returned in a few days."

From the same place he sent Mr. Frith the following *jeu d'esprit* :— \*

### " THEOLOGICAL HOROLOGY.

" There's this to say about the Scotch,  
So bother bannocks, braes, and birks ;  
They can't produce a decent Watch,  
For Calvinists despise good works."

In October the Brookses were back in London, and Shirley, who during his holiday had still kept his editors supplied with "copy," was harder at work than ever.

On the 19th he contributes his first batch of "*Punch's* Table Talk"—"A notion of mine," he says, "which will enable me to fire away good stories of miscellaneous reading and thinking." It was the first of a long series of disjointed paragraphs, which, at this distance of time, it must be confessed, read rather jejune.

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\* Afterwards used in *Punch*.

## DEATH OF PALMERSTON

On October 12th, he records in his diary :—

“ T. Taylor, Bristol, intimates that he cannot longer afford the luxury of a London Letter. This I expected, and am glad that the work, which was irksome and cut into better things, will cease. He wrote very properly, and I replied very ditto. . . . Emily went to Oxford to see the boys, and reported very well of Rego, but thinks the Pig\* not so happy. R. has swum across the Thames and back. Bravo ! ”

On October 14th :—

“ Got box for E. and Mrs. Frith at Adelphi—went. Saw Mrs. Mellon’s capital *Nan* in ‘ Good for Nothing ’ ; real acting. Jefferson, the American, in ‘ Rip Van Winkle,’ which has been a hit—crowded house. The best American actor I have seen, and the first act, while *Rip* is young, the best acting I have seen for years. Repose, ease, and absence of all stage trick. The piece is weak, like all Boucicault’s, because the author has no earnestness, and half the house cried while the other half laughed. I have seen the play somewhere, in another form, and acted by some other American, years ago. Fearfully hot, and this is the way we undo the good done by Highland air. I *won’t* more than I can help.”

On October 18th Lord Palmerston dies, and he writes :—

“ Some words in the *Times* to-day had rather prepared me for this, and I abstained from writing the second *Illustrated N.* article until next day. M. L. sent me up word of the death, and asked me to write something for *P.P.* It is a difficult work, but I accepted. I am glad I saw so much of Palmerston in

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\* Cecil’s nickname.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

the House. I heard the great Pacifico speech, 15th June, 1850, and did the summary. I heard Peel's last speech, made in the same debate. I wrote to Palmerston for his autograph with that date and he sent it me a year afterwards, saying that he took it for granted that I was one of those who held by the old saying, better late than never. It is in the frame with the not good portrait of him. I think that the last time I saw him was after the inauguration of Durham's statue of the Consort, in S. Kensington Gardens, when we were quite close in the crowd coming away—he was in the Windsor uniform. He would have been 81 had he lived till Friday. A true Englishman."

The verses occupied him all day, but in the end proved so good that Brinley Richards, the composer of "God bless the Prince of Wales," set them to music. One verse, however, drew down upon his head the animadversions of an anonymous correspondent, who pointed out that in it he had used seven "his's" and six "hers"!

It ran :—

"But his heart was his England's, his idol her honour,  
Her friend was his friend, and his foe was her foe,  
Were her mandate despised, or a scowl passed upon her,  
How stern his rebuke, or how vengeful his blow!"

"He *can* count," wrote Shirley. "Ass! I should have put more if I had wanted them."

On October 27th Palmerston was buried, and he notes :—

"A fine day, as Palmerston would have desired. An English funeral, unless military, is a miserable show, and this was no exception. An interminable string of carriages."

## B. & E. "AND CO."

On November 1st there is a "stunning" entertainment given to the *Punch* staff at the "Albion," "as a sort of inauguration of the new firm (Bradbury, Evans *and* Co.), and the introduction of the Agnews. It was what Bunsby would call a howling good dinner. All the staff, the 4 B. & E.'s and 3 Agnews (not T. Taylor, who pleaded illness). I will set the array, as it may not be gathered again in a hurry. B. made a long speech, commending the sons to the friendship of the *Punch* men. Evans said that the history of B. & E. had begun, continued, and ended in mistakes, but now all was to go right. M. L. spoke very well and with an intention that a non-interference policy must be adhered to. I proposed 'The Ladies,' and Horace replied.

### F. M. E.

M. L.	Leigh
J. Tenniel	Burnand
Thos. Agnew	Agnew
S. B.	T. T. should have been here
Fred	W. Bradbury
Silver	Keene
J. H. Agnew	Bennett
Du Maurier	Horace M.

Bradbury

"After Mark had sung 'Cupid's Garden,' and while du Maurier was on a French song, I left, and dashed home in a hansom, but the bulk of the party stayed late."

Seven years later, on the retirement of Mr. F. M. Evans, the firm became Bradbury, Agnew & Co., as it is to this day.

About this time Percival Leigh sends him his photograph.



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

S. B. TO PERCIVAL LEIGH.

" Thanks, my dear Leigh. It is simply damnable, and I shall give it a place only until you have satten, sitten, sotten, what is it, to a London man, and had a decent one done. Yet, what wouldn't one give for even so bad a likeness of many a friend who was absorbed into Buddha before the art was invented ?

" I hope you'll like ' Table Talk ' ; the idea came on me in Scotland, as a means of saying *anything* that one remembered, or thought of. Mark was greatly pleased. I shall go on with the series if it seem to be liked by you all, and whether the kangaroos outside like it or not.\*

" Yes, yesterday was beastly. It was essential that something should be posted in a pillar box, and I could not send out my women in such weather, so went myself and earned an extra glass of gin and water, for which I am none the better at this writing.

" Ever yours,  
" S. B.

" *Monday, 5 p.m.*"

On November 9th Edmund Yates charges him with copying a line in " Table Talk " from one of his books.

" Utterly unaware thereof," he writes, " the idea is too common to be anybody's. Answered him with a fictitious quotation from a burlesque, older, of course, than his book. Wonder whether he'll be sold ! "

On November 17th he revisits Oswestry which, as we have seen, always held a warm place in his affections, to lecture in aid of the Institute. He was full of gout and " could wear an old shoe only " on the journey.

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\* The series continued until Feb. 10, 1866, when Parliament met and " The Essence " took its place.

## LECTURES AT OSWESTRY

But he was determined not to disappoint his old friends, and was well rewarded for his pains. "Hall seats 750," says his diary, "but there were 800, and all sorts of Church folk and swells who don't ever come to this Hall, because it had a Dissenting origin. Two M.P.'s. I felt that I might be ill, and perhaps took extra pains, but never gave the lecture more steadily. . . . A little old thing came up laughing to 'shake hands for the sake of old times.' . . . I had, of course, forgotten her, but she was a girl when I was a boy at O., and my aunt M., I remember, told me not to fall in love with her—whereof there was no danger, by reason of her ugliness."

And the next day :—

"I find I have cleared off their debt, so that my visit answers its purpose. And I may say to myself that the fellow who left Oswestry rather as a wild kind of young fellow, thought to be loose, is not exactly sorry to go back, find all walls for miles round placarded with his name, and that name drawing all the intense respectability of the region. This is not vanity, but a grateful recognition of the turn of events."

Towards the end of this year Mr. Frith became for the first time a grandfather, and Shirley wrote :—

S. B. TO MR. FRITH, R.A.

" ' PUNCH ' OFFICE,  
" Nov. 21st, 1865.

FRITH, EVEN GRANDFATHER FRITH,

" With my whole soul do I congratulate thee and the grandmamma, and the venerable Aunt Sissy, and all the small uncles and infinitesimal aunts, or emmets. But chiefly I congratulate *thee*, O reverent and reverend, on the opportunity now afforded thee for the mending of thy ways. Henceforth we look for no frivolity from

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

thee, no unseemly gibes and jests to which thou also addest 'That's good,' and echo is silent. Henceforth thou must study to live at peace with all men, and let thy hair become white hairs, and let us hear no more when—announceth his 'last exhibition' that thou didst hope it would begin at three minutes to eight a.m., and be at Newgate. Truly this is a great chance for thee, O man of palettes, and aerial perspectives, and conscientious work, such as the *Athenæum* loves to indicate with the gesture called 'taking a sight.' Learn psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, to be chanted unto thy grandchild, and endeavour to obtain some knowledge of geography, etymology, tintacks, and prosody, that thou mayest not be put utterly to shame when the child shall demand information of thee. Leave off smoking, yet keep a box for thy younger friends who are not grandfathers. Scoff not at architects, for what wouldst thou be but for houses? Nay, art thou not the founder of a house? Look no longer at the ankle of the other sex, save in the way of thy calling, and speak no soft words unto the maidens, saying, 'Lord, I adore thee,' when thou dost nothing of the kind. Abjure the society of low Bohemians like —— and —— but cultivate the honest and virtuous, like Brooks, and in so far as thou mayest, imitate him. Do not eat too much ham at breakfast, for temperance becometh better with age. Read few novels, but let those thou readest be of the best, as 'Broken to Harness,' 'The Silver Cord,' 'An Artist's Proof,' and 'Blount Tempest.' Likewise begin to dress less jauntily, and wear a high waistcoat like the Right Reverend Bellew, and the Right Reverend Brooks. When thou goest to the Academy dinner, avoid, so far as thou canst, the taking too much wine, for what thing is less dignified than a swiping grandfather? Cherish these counsels in the apple of thy right eye, and in the pineapple of thy rum; and let

## EARNINGS

thankful that, at a time of life when other young men may not ungracefully indulge in youthful levity, thou art called to a higher and a graver sphere. Buy a stick and practise walking with it, bending thy back, and not perking up elegantly when a comely female passeth by. Have grave men to thy feasts, notably him who expecteth the interview with Mrs. Cottle, and to suffer as he never suffered before. So I greet thee, grandfather, and hope that thou wilt have many grandsons and granddaughters, and wilt ask me to the christening of them all. "S. B."\*

The year ends with a full account of his earnings, which are not without interest :—

	£	s.	d.	
" <i>Punch</i> to Aug. 20th, when change. 30 weeks ..	375	0	0	
Ditto since. 22 weeks ..	262	10	0	
<i>Illustrated</i> , salary ..	163	16	0	
Bristol, till stop ..	90	0	0	
<i>Illustrated</i> extra, Palmerston ..	17	17	0	
<i>Once a Week</i> (Xmas Story) ..	10	10	0	
Almanac† .. ..	16	16	0	
Leech book .. ..	50	0	0	more
<i>Home News</i> .. ..	63	0	0	
Extra ditto .. ..	14	14	0	
Pocket-Book .. ..	15	9	9	
	£1,079	12	9	9

\* *Vide* Frith's "Reminiscences," Vol. III, pp. 277 and 278.

† As a delicate attention on the part of the publishers, special copies of the Almanac were this year printed upon linen in the shape of handkerchiefs and presented to the staff, who had suffered much from influenza! These should now fetch considerable prices in the sale-room amongst collectors of literary curiosities.

‡ In addition to the above he had this year received £400 for his novel, but the work had been done before.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

“ If my calculations are right, and they must be *very nearly*, I have or shall have received the above, hard cash, for my work in '65, which hard cash last year was only £821. This advance is satisfactory, but, D.V., we must increase it.

“ 31st Dec., 1865.”

So much for the year 1865 with its diary rescued from the storehouse of Fate. For the next three years the diaries are to seek, and the progress of Shirley's life must be gathered from such of his letters as have survived and come into my hands, and such other sources as are available.

In the first he sends Mr. Frith one of those many unusable curiosities, which are showered upon the editors of humorous publications :—

S. B. TO MR. FRITH, R.A.

“ 4. 1. 1866.

“ MY DEAR FRITH,

“ . . . . Do look at this bit of Cottleism. It is sent to *Punch*, but of course we can make no use of it.

“ ‘ DOWLING.—Dec. 22nd, at his mundane abode, 25 Foreland Street, off Exmouth Street, Birkenhead, the wife of Abraham John Dowling, preacher of the Gospel, late an un-sentenced prisoner in Chester Castle for preaching the Gospel, of a son and heir, by the mother's side (who is Elizabeth, third and youngest daughter of the late Captain William Williams, of Liverpool and Dublin.) Thanks be ascribed to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, man's only Saviour, blessed be His most holy name, the suffering mother and son have been brought through the furnace, and are both doing well—bless the Lord : this child making the third arduous though at length happy delivery. Hallelujah. Praise the Lord. Amen and Amen.’

“ MEN AND MARASCHINO ”

“ I hope that Mrs. Frith was not permanently the worse for her kindly coming to us on the Eve. We heard that it had knocked her up a little, but trust this result was temporary only.

“ The Lush and Shee joke was sent to Lemon by three different people a fortnight ago and more. I am sorry that he did not use it—for it is very good. What I thought you were going to mention was the Duchess of Something’s response to ‘ Wine and Women,’ ‘ Men and Maraschino.’

“ Ever yours,  
“ S. B.”

S. B. TO MRS. FRITH.

“ ‘ PUNCH ’ OFFICE,  
“ 27 BOUVERIE STREET.

“ MY DEAR MRS. FRITH,

“ This has just been sent ; it is a report of a meeting of a Manchester Board.

“ ‘ The other business was entirely routine, except that the clerk (Mr. John Harrop) amused the Board by reading the following letter, as a curiosity, in its literary, no less than in its social aspect :—

“ *February 2nd, 1866.*

“ Would you be so kind & obliging as to Look in the House for me if there be a child newly Born, or is going to be born Soon to be parted with as one of our own but not with red hair it will have A good home & Learning. I should be very glad if you could supply me with one soon i could like it about A fortnight old or under a Month old i have been married about ten years. Now I think we shall Not have any of our own, and if you can supply me with one you will do a kindness And send me word and I will come for it in a week or a fortnight after i have a comfortable home and stays at home regular dressmaker And your nothing to fear

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

about me bringing it back for if I get a fine baby I keep it but I want so young so that I can bring it up my own way and that people wont know but why it is our own for I will go off for about a week or a fortnight before I come for it so that they wont know.”’

“ I think you will have a laugh. I hope that you are rapidly recovering from the trouble, which it was so sad to see you undergoing, while trying to make us all enjoy ourselves.

“ Ever affectly.,  
“ SHIRLEY BROOKS.”

This year, I learn from an article by Mr. William Archer in the *Tribune*, Shirley gave evidence before the select committee of the House of Commons which was enquiring into the functions of the Censor of Plays. His suggestion was that that official should be converted into a sort of theatrical public-prosecutor, empowered to suspend a representation on the properly authenticated complaint of a certain number of responsible persons, until its merits or demerits should be determined by a court or committee constituted to that end. The suggestion seems sensible enough, and, I agree with Mr. Archer, might, with some modifications, be made workable and certainly more satisfactory than the present antiquated procedure. But the matter is one which cannot be dealt with at large in these pages. Those who are interested in the subject should read the history of the events which led up to the statutory establishment of the Censorship, as set forth in Mr. Watson Nicholson’s painstaking book, “ The Struggle for a Free Stage in London.”

It was about this time that Charles F. Browne,

## ARTEMUS WARD

better known as Artemus Ward, made his few contributions to *Punch*, to the first of which allusion is made in the following letter. He was already much broken in health, and died at Southampton on March 6th of the following year. He was one of the eighteen guests at Shirley's hospitable board on New Year's Eve, 1866, and, though he had never set eyes on his host before, was put up to propose his health. He proved himself equal to the occasion.

Fixing his eye on a distant corner of the room and speaking with exaggerated seriousness as was his wont, he said, with his peculiar American drawl, that he supposed that he, who had no knowledge of Shirley Brooks whatever, had been put up to propose his health for that very reason, presumably because anyone who did know him wouldn't have a good word to say for him. He then went on to eulogize his host, drawing wholly upon his imagination for his many virtues, and finally sat down amidst a roar of applause and laughter.

S. B. TO PERCIVAL LEIGH.

*Monday.*

"MY DEAR PROFESSOR,

"Thanks for your letter. Enjoy yourself, and be thankful that you are out of this infernal city, and its paint-pots. We were rather choked with copy this week, owing to Artemus Ward opening with us, and one or two other things that would not keep, so that some of your contributions stand over, but we shall want them 'in our next.' I don't know whether you will like to look over your proofs again, but it just occurs to me that the excellent verses on Bribery would be the better for another glance. I *can't* get



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

at the metre of the opening line ; is there a syllable too many ? Stacey\* will send it you, anyhow, but don't alter it if *you* are satisfied.

" Yesterday we joined Mr. and Mrs. Fred Evans at Windsor, and after service in the chapel (I was in the organ-loft, so worshipped in room and comfort, despising the hot crowd below), we had a carriage and *two* horses, went about the Park, and to Virginia Water, lunched at the 'Wheatsheaf,' and dined at the 'White Hart' in Windsor. Home by 10.50. A well-spent Sabbath, I think.

" I will remember the young ladies and the crests ; when my boys come back I shall be able to do something, as they *were* collectors, but have taken to more athletic amusements.

" It is really lovely weather, which makes London all the more beastly to

" Yours ever,  
" S. B."

It will be seen from the above that Leigh's contributions were crowded out to make room for those of Artemus Ward. This probably was the reason rather than the excuse at that time, but later on, as Mr. Spielmann touchingly puts it, "the decay of nature robbed him of his value as a member of the staff. Then came an example of the kindliness of spirit that has animated for so long the little coterie of humorists of Bouverie Street and the generosity of the men for whom they work. For a long while before his death 'the Professor's' copy had been practically useless to the Editor, yet everything was done to spare him the pain of rejection. At first Mr. Burnand or Mr.

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\* The head printer.

## “ PROFESSOR ” LEIGH

Arthur à Beckett would re-write the paragraphs, and Leigh's delight when they were printed was sad to see. But soon it was impossible to conceal the fact that they were utterly useless, and so for some years it was the practice to set his 'copy' up in type and to send him proofs, which he duly corrected and returned. But they never appeared in the paper, nor was ever question asked nor explanation offered. Did the old gentleman forget all about them? Or was he hoping against hope that some day room might again be found for him in the pages to which he had contributed with so much applause? Or did he appreciate the real motive and kindly feeling of the proprietors, who, though they could not use his work, actually increased his salary? Whatever the cause, 'the Professor' to the last maintained a pathetic silence."

In June of this year *Mr. Punch* presented to the world his Fiftieth Volume, and the *Punch* staff, to mark the occasion, presented their beloved editor, Mark Lemon, with a watch, and a chain of eleven golden links to denote their golden number. In return he entertained the staff at a luncheon at Burnham Beeches, and made the following speech about the "*Brotherhood of Punch*" :—\*

" My friends, you have lightened my labour by your readiness at all times to help me all you can. We have never had a serious dispute. And in our so working together, proprietors and contributors, lies the secret of our great success. I received a pound a week at first for editing, but, as the success increased,

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\* From Mr. Henry Silver's notes.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

my salary increased. Our Brotherhood shows that, irritable as authors may be called, they yet can work together, if joined by real friendship and working for a good end. And *Punch* has worked for a good end, and done really a great good. Shirley's admirable preface is not over-praise. *Punch* has blotted out the *Age* and the *Satirist*, and other vile publications which, before *Punch* existed, were the only amusing journals of the day."

To the list of vile publications which *Punch* had blotted out Mark Lemon might have added one entitled *Hell's News*, which promised to report the fashionable doings there, and particularly to give a list of the "latest arrivals"!

"I suppose," said Shirley one day, "it was chiefly penned by printers' devils, but where the deuce they could expect to find a publisher I can't think, unless it were in Fiendland!" \*

Shirley's "Preface" referred to by Mark Lemon was a very happy effort and was surmounted by a brilliant drawing by Charles Keene, of *Mr. Punch* in evening dress surrounded by the most prominent personages of the day: Tennyson, Millais, Bright, Kingsley, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and others, all excellent likenesses. *Punch* is on his legs replying to the toast of our present gracious King, then a slim and beardless stripling, who is seated on his right.

In the evening the Staff dined at Maidenhead with the proprietors, who presented the Editor with a great silver cup. Then the Staff were toasted (and buttered) in their turn, and Shirley replied on their behalf.

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\* Presumably "Finland."

## MISS FURTARDO

"We really are, you know, rather a Remarkable Lot," he began, and he concluded, "as for myself, I have given *Punch* my best work, and I never enjoy writing so much as for *Punch*. I was at Margate fifteen years ago, when Mark asked me to join. I began with 'Miss Violet,' and have rarely let a number pass without an article of mine. I am the connecting link between the old men and the new, and it will ever be my pride and pleasure to be with the men of *Punch*."\*

In September it had been suggested that the Friths and Brookses should again make holiday together, and Shirley wrote :—

S. B. TO MRS. FRITH.

" ' PUNCH ' OFFICE,  
" BOUVERIE STREET,

" Sept. 1st, 1866.

"I send my dear Mrs. Frith a few lines to thank her very kindly and sincerely, but it must be Boulogne-upon-the-Sea. I have to work for du Maurier, and we must be together. Another year I hope we may make holiday together—that is, if I am not divorced in the meantime. The fact is we went to the Adelphi last night, and had a box close to the stage.

"MISS FURTARDO!!!

"But I draw a veil over the scene. It was not *my* fault. I *am* susceptible. I have a large heart. I submit, perhaps, too easily, to fascinations.

"There is no open quarrel *yet*. It may be averted.

"But the truce can only be oller. I have met my FATE. Think kindly of me if you can.

"I am going to try whether partridges and champagne will act as oil upon the troubled waters. I fear it will be only oil of vitriol.

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\* From Mr. Silver's notes.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

"Again I say, think kindly of me.

"It was HER fault that we got a box, mind that.

"It was also HER fault that we stayed to see 'Helen.'  
I wanted to go home and smoke.

"But recriminations are idle. It was Fate—  
'Kismet,' as the Orientals say. I have forgiven my  
wife for being less attractive than Miss Furtardo. Can  
man do more? Can woman? Again I say, think  
kindly of the enamoured and remorseful

"SHIRLEY."\*

The channel boat joke recorded in the following  
letter was afterwards, I think, illustrated for *Punch*  
by du Maurier. The signature refers to the fact that  
Shirley stood godfather to Mrs. Frith's youngest  
daughter, who was christened "Evelyn Shirley," and  
died the following year.

S. B. TO MRS. FRITH.

"BEDFORD HOTEL,

"COVENT GARDEN,

"Sept. 22nd, 1866.

"MY DEAR MRS. FRITH,

"Thank you very much for the kind invitation  
for Wednesday, of which, if I am in England on that  
day, I will gladly avail myself, but there seems to be  
a muddle between Paris and Dieppe, and I may have  
to run over previously. Do not, therefore, make any  
extensive preparations for me—a little turtle, some  
venison cutlets, an omelette (herb), some meringues  
and some of the best Burgundy will amply suffice my  
modest requirements, and if I do not come Frith may  
eat my share, and drink his own. *Seriatim*, however (as

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\* *Vide* Frith's "Reminiscences," Vol. III, pp. 387-8.

## “ SHOTTEN HERRING ”

Joe Hume used to say, meaning ‘ seriously ’), I hope to be with you, and welcome you home to London. The weather is simply beastly. The du Mauriers returned on Thursday, having had a good voyage.

“ I heard from my wife to-day, she complains of the excessive dullness of Paris, which I rather hope she leaves to-day : the longer I live, the more I am convinced that the British practice of leaving a comfortable home, for a series of uncomfortable ones, is a piece of *idiotcy*, but we shall go on doing it till the end of the chapter.

“ I have nothing else to tell you except an epigrammatic remark made by an Englishman as we were crossing in the boat. When we were about half-way over he suddenly saw a friend on board. ‘ Ah ! ’ he said, ‘ you ! ’ Then, inspired by a happy thought, he added, ‘ Are you going across ? ’ which, as we were in the middle of the voyage, seemed probable, as there are no islands to touch at. But it did as well as anything else, and the other man was worthy of it, for he said, ‘ Well, I think so.’ N.B.—Neither has capacity for the smallest chaff—it was *bonâ fide*.

“ That Dr. P.\* did not poison the artist, that is clear, but I think he behaved very badly. I suppose his mind was demoralized from associating with artists. I am glad the Jew that hung the child in the cellar is going to be [X] himself, but I trust the rope will break so that he may have a double dose.

“ ‘ Shooting ’ at Bournemouth—what did the Wretch go out to shoot ?—herrings ? Now then, when he has done deriding the suggestion as nonsensical, perhaps he will remember that Shakespeare (if he ever heard of him), talks of a ‘ shotten herring.’ Now then.

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\* Dr. E. W. Pritchard, who poisoned his wife and mother-in-law with antimony, and was executed this year.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

“ But I will not longer detain you from your religious duties, for this should reach you on Sunday morning, and it is not for a godfather to treat such things lightly.

“ Ever Shirley’s affectionate

“ S.P.O.N.S.O.R.

“ Love to the Portrait Painter.”

This year the commission was sitting to enquire into the case of Governor Eyre. The country was divided into two antagonistic parties, the one, headed by Carlyle, holding that “ by his prompt action he had saved the white population,” the other, by John Stuart Mill, that he was little better than a fiend in human shape. *Punch* sided with the Governor, and Shirley was turned on to express his sentiments in “ The Bold Governor Eyre and the Bulls of Exeter Hall.” I have space for but two verses :—

“ The victim, just now, of its blatter and blare,  
Is a brave British gentleman, Governor Eyre,  
Who, for saving Jamaica with powder and ball,  
Has roused all the malice of Exeter Hall.

\* \* \*

“ But if, when the tale of Jamaica is told,  
The Queen gives her thanks to the Governor bold,  
What a bellow will burst from the favourite stall  
Of the big bulls of Bashan in Exeter Hall.”

As we know, Governor Eyre, so far from receiving his Sovereign’s thanks, received his *congé*, and the big bulls of Bashan were saved the trouble of bellowing.

The holiday of this year was spent in France, whence he wrote :—

## AT BOULOGNE

S. B. TO MR. F. EVANS.

“ No. 39 HOTEL FOLKESTONE,  
“ BOULOGNE-S.-M.,  
“ Monday, Sept. 10th, 1866.

“ MY DEAR FRED,

“ Just a line to say *que nous sommes ici*. The loveliest passage on Sunday I ever had—then a concert—and finally a ball, this not being a Christian country, as you know. Of course, we see the du Mauriers constantly. Neither is looking at all well, but they appear to have got over all terrors. The English have rushed away in loads, but there are still enough to take the place by a general insurrection, only it must be before dinner. Afterwards they would be overpowered and good-natured. I do not know, as yet, whether we shall ‘conclude’ to stay here any time. Du Maurier proposes to leave on Friday week. I merely write to give you my address, and I shall be glad to hear—and specially of an occasional evening paper. Kindest regards to the Firm and the Oblong.

“ Ever,  
“ S. BROOKS.”

S. B. TO MR. FRITH, R.A.

“ Wednesday, Sept. 19th, 1866.

“ Shegog the Faithful informs Cottle the Fair that I have come over to the United Kingdom alone. My wife is gone on to Paris, whence on Friday proxo. she will advance on Dieppe, with Mrs. and Miss Jerrold. There I shall, I think, join her next week. In the meantime I reside at the *Bedford Hotel, Covent Garden, London*. N.B.—Copy the address. N.B.—No. 2. D—the painters. I allude to the House Painters, not Grant and Co., of Trafalgar Square (at *present*, ha! ha!)

“ What are you doing, how are you doing, and how do you like it? We did not very much enjoy Boulogne,



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

I think. The weather was bad, so were the smells, and the cholera was raging. With these drawbacks and the infernal row, which prevented our sleeping a wink during the whole time we were there, 8 days, there was not much to complain of, but still I think that we did not much enjoy Boulogne. We went to several balls, at two of which our party, 5, formed the majority of the revellers. We ate many shrimps. We looked out at the window a great deal. These were our chief excitements, but a contented mind is a continual feast.

“London is dull. I went into the Club yesterday, and found 4 men grumbling in the garret. I went in again at night, and found 5 men sleeping in the smoke room.

“At Boulogne I was introduced to Mr. G. I reserve remarks until I know whether he is your bosom friend or not. He is not a good sailor. He dresses with neatness. His wife wears curls. These remarks cannot offend you, even if you wear him in your heart of hearts, ‘as I do thee.’

“‘A moral, sensible, and well-bred man  
Will not insult me—and no other *can*.’

*Cowper.*

“If you do not see the bearing of this quotation upon the preceding passage, telegraph to say so, and wait my reply.

“I await yours, and with homage to Madame,

“Am

“Your respectful friend,

“SHEGOG.

“P.S.—You are going to ask me why there is no Artemus Ward in to-day’s *P.P.* I am going to reply that I believe he sent in a contribution on some topic which Mark the Large thought would not be acceptable to the B.P. I have no reason to suppose that the

## QUAINT ADVERTISEMENTS

series will be discontinued. But I don't know, and I don't care, which is more.

"I suppose you had not the delicacy to write to me to Boulogne. If you have had it, the letter will be brought over by Geo. Busson du Maurier, who leaves at XII to-night, with all his family, coming all the way by the boat which took 36 hours on her Monday voyage, roosting in Margate Roads.

"Send the first of these advts. to Austin,\* the place may suit him. I have myself applied for the second, and the answer was unfit for publication.

"1. 'Wanted, an honest sober man, to wear the Advertising Coat. To a suitable person liberal wages given; height not less than 8 ft. 9 in. Address Woodruff, Post Office, Sheffield.

"2. 'A Lady deprived of a chaperon, wishes a Disengaged Gentleman about 30, as escort to a place of amusement. Address B. G., Post Office, Sale.'

"If you have come to town, let me know, and I will come and dine with you. Do not, however, come up with the family on purpose!"

In October he had rejoined Mrs. Brooks in France.

S. B. TO MR. FRITH, R.A.

"HOTEL DES BAINS,

*(Bains is the French for bath, but there are none in the house.)*

"DIEPPE, NORMANDY,

"FRANCE,

"Monday, Oct. 8th, 1866.

"MY DEAR COTTLE,

"I write because I said I would write, and to keep his promises is the folly of civilized man—the savages know better.

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\* The present poet-laureate.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

“ *Ici* we *sommes*, but *ici* we shall not *être*, I suppose, when this letter is delivered, as we propose to go home in a day or two. Not that I wish to go, for the place is delightful, and the weather heavenly, but business is business, and not pleasure, and to attend to business is the folly of civilized man—savages know better.

“ I wish with all my *cœur* that you were here ; you would thoroughly enjoy it. If you want to be active, there are the loveliest walks, and hills, and ruins ; and if you wish to be idle (which I generally do), there is a glorious sea, with a huge grass place—‘ *La Plage* ’—before it, and we look upon that. The season is quite over, and so much the better says Shegog, who does not habitually dress three times per day, as is Parisian custom here. Very good living, and I have drunk to you frequently in Burgundy, and brought my spirits to Burgundy pitch, which you will not confound with the stuff used for fastening ships together—I don’t mean two ships together, but the planks of one.

“ Henry the *Quatre* gained the battle of Ivry here, and the Dieppois are still celebrated for their carving in ivory. I have enjoyed myself severely, and I can confidently recommend Dieppe. To be sure, I have not yet paid my bill, but as my landlord says that a cheque will do perfectly well, I consider that matter as off everybody’s mind.

“ The Catholic religion is established here, but Protestantism is tolerated, or I would not have remained a day. We English show our religion on Sundays by wearing hats instead of wide-awakes, and smoking at the windows instead of in the garden before the house. It is gratifying to see such evidences of Christianity in a foreign land.

“ The posts are the devil here, and it is a bore. All letters go to Paris, and though one is but sixty miles from England, you won’t have this till Wednesday,

## C. H. BENNETT AND HIS HAIR

I believe ; but as you are not standing at the door waiting for it, you may not feel the delay so keenly as you otherwise would have done. The missis is now eager to get home—pardonable ambition in a *mère de famille*—but I am not impatient, and should like to stay another fortnight. Mrs. Milner-Gibson is here, and we have been for an excursion with her to Arques, where is an awfully fine old ruined castle, built by William the Bastard, conqueror of you *Anglais*. There are some pleasant travellers at our hotel, and we lie to one another over our cigars about the Marquises and Royal Academicians whom we *say* we know. The *filles de chambre* are rather to be respected than admired. The beds are good, but have those springs which squeal out every time one moves a limb.

“ I have heard from nobody here, which is the more singular as I gave nobody my address. I have not improved my mind here in the least, and my diary would (if kept) resemble the young fellow’s letter to his father from Italy : ‘ The Alps is a very high mountain, and bullocks fetches no prices at all.’ ‘ Dieppe is a sunny place, and cigars are 2½d.’

“ I beg kindest, and, at the same time, most respectful compliments to your good lady (I allude to Mrs. Frith) from me and mine.

“ *Agrééz*, etc.,

“ SHEGOG, in *partibus infidelium*.”\*

By the end of October he was back in London, as I learn from a delightful episode related in Mr. Spielmann’s “ History of *Punch*,” which he will forgive me for quoting in full :—

“ Another of *Punch*’s favourite sons was Charles H. Bennett. His life was a hard yet a happy one, and

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\* *Vide* Frith’s “ Reminiscences,” Vol. III, pp. 183–6.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

his career was short, though not too short for fame ; and the last two years during which he sat at the Table were perhaps the merriest of them all. But his attendances, really owing to the illness which ultimately bore him down, were irregular. This irregularity, combined with his habit, then commoner even than now among artists, of wearing his hair very long, brought him one day a letter from his friends and fellow-diners in the following terms :—

“ PUNCH ” COUNCIL, OCTOBER 24TH, 1866.

‘ Present :— Lemon                      W. H. Bradbury  
                  Evans                         G. du Maurier  
                  Horace Mayhew     Evans *filis*  
                  Tom Taylor             S. Brooks  
                  Leigh                         Tenniel

‘ Resolved :—

‘ That this meeting deeply sympathises with C. H. Bennett on the state of his hair.

‘ That this meeting appreciates the feeling which detains the said Bennett from the Council until his hair shall have been cut.

‘ That this meeting deplores the impecuniosity which prevents the said Bennett from attending a barber.

‘ That this meeting, anxious to receive the said Bennett to its bosom, once more organizes a subscription to enable him to attend the said barber.

‘ That this company, having (limited) confidence in Mr. Mark Lemon, entrusts him with the following subscriptions in aid of the above object, and requests him to communicate with the aforesaid Bennett to the end that he may have his d— hair cut and rejoin the assembly of the brethren.

## PARTING KICK TO 1866

	£	s.	d.
' (Signed) Mark Lemon ..	.. 0	0	1
Frederick Evans ..	.. 0	0	1
Percival Leigh ..	.. 0	0	1
Horace Mayhew ..	.. 0	0	1
Tom Taylor ..	.. 0	0	1
W. H. Bradbury ..	.. 0	0	1
George du Maurier ..	.. 0	0	1
F. M. Evans ..	.. 0	0	1
Shirley Brooks ..	.. 0	0	1
J. Tenniel ..	.. 0	0	1
Stamps enclosed	..	<u>0</u>	<u>0 10</u>

“ And these ten penny stamps, together with the letter, are to this day treasured by the artist's son.”

So ends the record for the year 1866, a year of which Shirley was apparently not sorry to see the end, for he wrote “ Our Parting Kick to 1866,” beginning :—

“ Get out, old year, get out, get out,  
 And don't keep lingering here about.  
 We don't care whether you've got the gout,  
 Or what's the matter, but just get out !  
 You stupid, sorrowful, sad old year  
 You maundering, mischievous, mad old year,  
 Oh law, we're heartily glad, old year,  
 To enjoy the kicking you out ! ”

Happily there was still hope in the future and he concluded :—

“ Come in, New Year, with your hopeful smile,  
 To end our ditty of blare and bile,  
 That mean old cuss was enough to rile  
 An angel's temper, but you'll strike Ile.  
 You nice, no naughtiness, neat new year,  
 You smiling, saucy face, sweet new year,  
 Your look increases the treat, my dear,  
 Of kicking that old Cad out ! ”

## CHAPTER XV

1867-1868—The *Tomahawk*—Death of Charles Bennett—Summer Holidays—Letters to Bradbury—Letters to Mr. Frith—Ramsgate—*Home News*—Letters to P. Leigh and Mrs. George—“Ponny” Mayhew’s Dinner—Mrs. Frank Romer (Mrs. Jopling Rowe)—Letters to P. Leigh.



ANY as have been *Punch*'s rivals, few have given such brilliant promise as the short-lived *Tomahawk*, which had its beginning in 1867. Shirley, of course, had nothing to do with its publication, but he was indirectly responsible for its title.\*

One day at the *Punch* Table conversation turned on the *Saturday Review*, which had decreased greatly both in interest and circulation since it had given up the vinegar and pepper trade and taken to supplying the public with sugar plums and treacle. Shirley regretted the change, and said with his usual quickness that he had a good mind to start the *Latterday Review* to take up the old business. Then it struck him that that would be plagiarising Carlyle, and he thought the *Tomahawk* would be a better title.

\* From Mr. Silver's notes.

## THE "TOMAHAWK"

It should be "wielded" by a staff of slashing critics, and its motto should be "We'll always axe our way!" Probably he repeated the joke elsewhere. At any rate the *Tomahawk* immediately came into existence with its splendid series of cartoons by Matt Morgan, and under the editorship of one who has since played a large part in the history of its great rival, one indeed who for long held the same prominent position on the staff which Shirley held during the editorship of Mark Lemon.

On the 2nd of April of this year\* Shirley received a letter from Lemon announcing the untimely death of their much-loved colleague, Charles Bennett—"A man," Shirley indorsed on the letter, "whom one could not help loving for his gentleness, and a wonderful artist." "He was," he wrote in *Punch*, "a very able colleague, a very dear friend. None of our fellow-workers ever entered more heartily into his work, or laboured with more earnestness to promote our general purpose. His facile execution and singular subtilty of fancy were, we hoped, destined to enrich these pages for many a year. It has been willed otherwise, and we lament the loss of a comrade of invaluable skill, and the death of one of the kindest and gentlest of our associates, the power of whose hand was equalled by the goodness of his heart."

Bennett was but thirty-seven when he died, and the fact that he left a widow and eight children afforded just one of those opportunities which *Punch* and his staff were always ready to seize.

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\* *Vide* Everitt's "English Caricaturists."



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

“ We shall have to do something,” wrote Shirley, and something to good purpose they accordingly did. A committee was at once formed and a performance in aid arranged at the Adelphi. Between the two parts of the entertainment Shirley came on and delivered an address, written by him for the occasion, from which I quote a few lines :—

“ You knew his power, his satire keen and fair,  
And the rich fancy, served by skill as rare.  
You did *not* know, except some friendly few,  
That he was earnest, gentle, patient, true.”

Amongst the performers was that delightful actress, Miss Kate Terry, who was just about to be married to Mr. Arthur James Lewis, to which fact Shirley made the following graceful and half-regretful allusion :—

“ Last, but not least, in your dear love and ours  
There is a head we'd crown with all our flowers.  
Our kindest thanks to her whose smallest grace  
Is the bewitchment of her fair young face.  
Our own Kate Terry comes, to show how much  
The truest art does with the lightest touch.  
Make much of her while still before your eyes,  
A star may glide away to other skies.”

By this performance and a second given at Manchester, together with Shirley's unstinted labour to the same end, a large sum was raised and handed to the sorrowing widow. It was but one example of the spirit which has always actuated the *Punch* staff—never to be backward in succouring a stricken comrade and those dependent upon him.

The summer holiday of this year was spent in England.



*John Russell* *John Russell* *John Russell* *John Russell* *John Russell* *John Russell* *John Russell* *John Russell* *John Russell* *John Russell*  
*John Russell* *John Russell* *John Russell* *John Russell* *John Russell* *John Russell* *John Russell* *John Russell* *John Russell* *John Russell*  
*John Russell* *John Russell* *John Russell* *John Russell* *John Russell* *John Russell* *John Russell* *John Russell* *John Russell* *John Russell*

Photo by  
 The London Stereoscopic Co.  
 GROUP OF THE PERFORMERS IN THE CHARLES BENNETT "BENEFIT"

2

## ON HOLIDAY

S. B. TO W. H. BRADBURY.

"REV. P. CUDLIP'S,

"YEALHAMPTON,

"DEVONSHIRE.

"*Sunday, Sept. 8th, 1867.*

"MY DEAR WILLIAM,

"We have been rambling from these our head quarters, and sleeping away in regions where the *Times* is not a power, though the *Western Daily News* is one. So I have seen an interesting announcement only in going through my file this day. We are rejoiced to learn that Mrs. William's trouble is happily over, and my wife begs to join me in best wishes for the speedy convalescence of the mamma and the present and future welfare of the baby. Perhaps you will kindly convey that greeting, and thereby make it the more acceptable.

"This is a glorious country and I am delighted with it, but it is hard work to *rest* as I am now doing, that is, being taken up and down the most night-mare-ish hills, at full speed, all day, and indeed part of the night. *Ex pede Herculem*—we yesterday *did* a moor, and got home at midnight, having, on the previous day *done* Totnes, Dartmouth, Torquay, and another moor. But I am very well, and eat and sleep like Mark Lemon, including noble snoring. He might have sent me a line from the Council, an ungrateful and bloated Kuss. We shall be here a few days longer. You won't get this till Tuesday, as Sunday's post goes out before one is well awake. Remember me to all the friends who gather for the hellish orgy on Wednesday, and to Fred, when you write, and believe me

"Ever yours sincerely,

"My dear W. H. B.,

"SHIRLEY BROOKS.

"W. H. Bradbury."

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

S. B. TO MR. FRITH, R.A.

“ ESPLANADE,

“ PENZANCE,

“ *Saturday, Sept. 21st, 1867.*

“ MY DEAR COTTLE,

“ ‘Behold ’em ’ere!’ ’Ere is not Penzance, but Ilfracombe, Devonshire. The above represents feebly (I am now critical in art, for I have got the very house occupied last year by Tom Taylor), the stunning hotel at Penzance where we were exceedingly comfortable for some days, and whence we made ‘excrescences’ to the Land’s End and other wonderful works of nature. ‘It is a holy thing,’ said Mr. Squeers, ‘to be in a state of nature.’

“ This reminds me that we went down a copper-mine, half-a-mile under the sea, by a wire rope tied to a car about as big as a coal-scuttle—a sensation!—but a previous sensation was reading in the guide-book, ‘Before descending you must divest yourself of every article of apparel, and——’ Here I closed the book, and put it away as S—b—ian, but learning that you could compromise by taking off your coat and tucking up your trowsers, and putting on a miner’s dress, white, splashed with yellow mud, I reconsidered the subject. You should have seen Mrs. Shirley in a long white thing like a vast nightgown, and with a thick yellow dreadnought! But she did the perilous descent gallantly, commending her soul to the supreme powers, and the splashes through the crevices to the devil (I believe).

“ The Duke of Cornwall, Plymouth, is a splendid new hotel, with all the comforts, and close to the train. We did all the sights, including the Breakwater, which is not worth doing. But the coast scenery of both Cornwall and Devon is glorious. Very likely I am telling you what you know, for Reynolds was born in

## ILFRACOMBE

Devonshire, and you might have been born anywhere you chose. We have done an awful lot, and I am glad to have got to a resting-place for a week in this lovely place. We are on the top of a high hill, and see Lundy Isle, Wales, Jerusalem, and Madagascar ; and to-day we are going to have squab-pie and junket.

“ From du Maurier I glean that you are all a happy colony, and I hope to see you after we get back. At Helston there were two pictures, regarded as household treasures. One was ‘Coming of Age,’ and the other the ‘Sports in the Olden Time.’ I obtained much kudos by saying that I knew the painter—that I had stood for the young heir ; and the grandad in the other was Spurgeon, to whom I had introduced you when you persuaded him to sit to you. This will become a Cornish legend. At Plymouth Station there is a three-legged cat, and not a Manx cat (good), but one whose leg was cut off by a railway-engine. This is the most remarkable thing I have seen, except the Devil’s Bellows at Kinance Bay, which is more remarkable ; but I do not know why.

“ I have had my hair cut by a barber called Petherwick Peninluma ; and I have had my old shoes mended for 1s. 9d., and they are more comfortable than my new ones, which cost a guinea. Such, my Cottle, is a lesson that should teach us how little real value there is in money, on which, moreover, Providence sets no store, or He would not bestow it on the unworthy, like — ; but no matter, I am in charity with all mankind. My address is 5 Castle Terrace, Ilfracombe. Give us a hail ! My wife says I have taken her ‘out of the world.’ She eats well, however, for an angel.

“ Ever faithfully yours,  
“ SHIRLEY BROOKS.”\*

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\* *Vide* Frith’s “Reminiscences.”

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

In October the Brookses joined the Friths at Ramsgate. Here is a glimpse of the interesting group of people, which went to make this holiday memorable.

"Think," writes Mrs. Panton to me, "of the Sotherns, the du Mauriers, the Twisses, ourselves and the Shirley Brookses, the Calderons, Oscar Deutsch,\* flushed with his success from the article on the Talmud in the *Quarterly* which caused a most profound sensation . . . the Yateses, she the most beautiful creature I ever saw or ever shall see, and he the kindest of men. I can see the scene now . . . my father and Mrs. Yates on the balcony, Shirley and I talking from the balcony to Mr. Calderon and Mr. Deutsch in the garden; while at the piano in the lighted drawing-room du Maurier was singing like a nightingale, 'The Long, Long, Weary Day.' Mrs. du Maurier, *beautiful*, stately, and above all sweet and motherly, talking to my mother."

The day after his return home Shirley wrote :—

S. B. TO MR. FRITH, R.A.

"LONDON,

"Oct. 12th, 1867.

"MY DEAR COTTLE,

"What a time it seems since I saw you! Abstinence—I mean absence—makes the heart grow fonder—of somebody else. Oh, ile of booty (Thanet) fare thee well!

"I heard all you said when we went away. You forgot the echo of the tunnel. But it was nearly true, only I am *not* a cigar-smoking porpoise that fancies

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\* The well-known Semitic author.

## RAMSGATE V. MARGATE

himself a bird of Paradise, and it would *not* be better if I talked less and read more. The allusion to my gray hair and frivolity I forgive, because *gray* hair is better than *none at all*. But you had no right to say that I 'looked a cad, and you were glad none of your noble patrons were on the platform,' because I have always spoken well of you in low newspapers; and as for O'Neil laughing at your wit (?), that is the only way he pays for his mammoth breakfasts and mastodon dinners. The ladies' remarks I forgive, because I have heard them say much worse things of you. La Belle Fanny is, however, wrong in saying my wife is sixty; she is only fifty-three next week. Sissy was right (and I thank your sweet child for her courage) in saying that she didn't care what any of you said, I *was* the only lively, unaffected, playful guest (who combined the paternal, fraternal, and infernal) you had had since you came to that detestable and snobbish Ramsgate.

"We had our other crosses. At Margate got in a handsome woman (my wife says she wasn't, but she was,) and three of the most villainously ugly brats ever permitted to live. Also a man with a dog. The little beasts—four—yelped, howled, ran about the carriage, growled in tunnels, and otherwise misbehaved themselves all the way; and the mother smiled as if they were angels. And all I could do was to pinch the child nearest to me, and sniff haughtily, as Ramsgate sniffs at Margate, and ask the guard whether there were no places in the *third class* into which we could get. If the mother had been ugly, I would have blown up; but she had the sweetest smile, and so—

"My kind love to Mrs. Frith, who is the only one, except Siss, that appreciates me. I am heartily glad to get back to my own vine and my own tooth-brush. Accept the enclosed unpublished trifle:—



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

“ When lovely woman grows too jolly,  
And scarcely minds what things she says,  
And when her lover, melancholy,  
Reproves her for her flirting ways,  
The only mode retreat to cover,  
To hit him hard with her reply ;  
In fact, to quite shut up that lover  
And make him wretched, is to—cry.

“ Love to you all, though you don't deserve it.

“ From yours ever,

“ S. B.”\*

We have seen that Shirley's first editorship, that of the *Literary Gazette*, was but short-lived. His second was destined, like his third, to endure to the last year of his life.

In 1847 Messrs. Grindlay and Company, combining private enterprise with public spirit, had founded a weekly periodical for India called *Home News*. When this was five years old an Australian edition was started, and forthwith the twin papers bounded ahead. During its brilliant and successful career of over fifty years *Home News* numbered amongst its editors such men as A. B. Wright, Robert Bell, G. A. Sala, T. H. S. Escott, Edward Salmon and Shirley Brooks. On the death of Robert Bell this year [1867] the editorship was offered to, and accepted by, Shirley, between whom and Mr. Matthews, a member of the firm, a close friendship was sealed which lasted, like most of Shirley's friendships, as long as life.

Of his incessant toil and loyal devotion to his new employers until, seven years later, his busy fingers

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\* *Vide* Frith's "Reminiscences."

## “ HOME NEWS ”

laid down the pen for ever, it is impossible to do more than say what might be said of all that he ever undertook,—that he never spared himself in the performance of his duty, that he gave of his best, which was very good, and that he was cut off from its continuance in the plenitude of his powers to the regret of all who knew him.

Here is a pleasant little account of his friendship with the Matthews family, kindly sent to me by Miss Matthews, the “ Torie ” of the Diaries.

“ We knew Mr. Shirley Brooks,” writes Miss Matthews, “ from the time he took the editorship of my father’s paper, the *Home News*, until his death in 1874, and he became an intimate and valued friend.

“ It was at a time of his life when the strain of work was beginning to tell, and he seemed to find refreshment and pleasure in frequent visits to our country cottage, an easy journey from London. He was often accompanied by his wife and sons, but more often came alone when the boys and their mother were spending the holidays by the seaside or elsewhere and when his work obliged him to be in or near London. As I write the vivid recollection of such visits comes back to me, when he would arrive weary and jaded and, after resting awhile perhaps on a favourite long couch or on the grass under a large cedar tree, find amusement in composing nonsense verses for the younger ones, or in helping a harassed school girl to remember dry historical dates by turning them into humorous rhymes, throwing his harness aside in fact and entering thoroughly into the home life of the family circle. In between such visits his frequent letters, sparkling with spontaneous wit and gay good humour, with pretty allusions to public and private passing events, were eagerly looked

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

for and appreciated by the young people as well by the elders. Apart from his always interesting comments and criticisms on public topics and amusing anecdotes, there was a graceful atmosphere, an elusive charm about his letters which defies description. It seemed to come not only from the clever head, straight from the warm heart. He was a genial and the remembrance of many pleasant evenings at 6 Kent Terrace remains with us, especially the festive New Year's Eve parties to which both Mr. and Mrs. Brooks loved to welcome their friends, when mutual good wishes were exchanged just before midnight, the New Year was ushered in by a graceful little speech. Once, too, the occasion was marked by Mr. Brooks' health being proposed by Artemus Ward with a good humour which delighted us all. He would often dine with us, and sometimes joined our larger gatherings and he made on (what proved to be) the last Christmas of his life a happy memory to us all by toasting each at a large party after dinner in verses he composed for the occasion, each one containing a special word for an individual named, showing how fully he entered into the intimate life of ourselves and the friends gathered round our table.

"Although most of the friends of his early life now have passed away, there may be some living who knew him better than we did, and for a longer period of his life, but we always thought he showed us one aspect of his character which was not visible to all; he seemed to expand in the atmosphere of unreserved appreciation and showed in return an affectionate gratitude which although we felt it to be wholly out of proportion, endeared him to young and old in the household.

An undated letter, probably of the year 1880, was the subject for the "Professor's" pen

## CHEATING THE DOCTOR

S. B. TO PERCIVAL LEIGH.

" 6 KENT TERRACE,  
" REGENT'S PARK,  
" N.W.  
" *Thursday.*

" MY DEAR PROFESSOR,

" Will you, if not better engaged, do me the pleasure of dining with me at 'Our Club' (Clunn's, Piazza, Covent Garden) on Saturday *next*, day after to-morrow, at 6 o'clock. I am, for my sins, in the chair. Pater and other friends will be there, and contribute to the discord of the evening. Do, and you can of course leave in time for any 'bus—all the fun is over by 10.

" . . . I wish you saw your way to a few lines on a report in to-day's *Times*. Bottom of a column. In which a medical man very properly took security for his fees for attending a pauper, and the jury had the impudence to regret it. They are tradesmen: would they have let the pauper have beef, beer, etc., without security? But always cheat the Doctor is the rule with the lower creation. It is in your line.

" Ever yours affectionately,  
" S. BROOKS."

A friend of former days has read his novel, "Sooner or Later," and writes asking for his autograph.

S. B. TO MRS. THORNE GEORGE.

" 6 KENT TERRACE,  
" REGENT'S PARK,  
" N.W.

" *Sunday, Feb. 9th.*"

" MY DEAR MRS. GEORGE,

" I sent off a paper in your note yesterday, being

at I had hurried to

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

it, as I now hasten to do. I enclose the autograph with much pleasure, and I will look up a few others which may be acceptable.

“Your note was a very welcome reminder of very pleasant times, to which I often recur. It was when the polka was a new and fashionable dance, which we did with elaborate pantomime. What is dancing? I know something about dining, but the other word has no meaning for me. The enclosed is the last effigy of the undersigned; he has a wife and two sons, the latter at school, and one of them proud of his first black eye, gained in fighting.

“I am always pleased when a friend likes my books. This last has been remarkably successful, but it is said to be objectionable, I am very sorry, I didn't mean to be naughty, I only told the truth, I won't do it again.

“I hope you will write to me again and tell me something about your family.

“Believe me,

“My dear Mrs. George,

“Yours most sincerely,

“SHIRLEY BROOKS.

“Mrs. Thorne George.”

About the same time he has a laugh at Mr. Frith over the current value of *his* autograph.

S. B. TO MR. FRITH, R.A.

“MY DEAR C——E,

“You always said you were a humorous party, but I never before had printed proof in support of the truth of your assertion. Here we are, however. I mean to buy this. It is from an autograph-seller's catalogue just received :—

“‘116 Frith (W. P.)

‘Humorous Note. 2 pp., 8vo., Oct. 14, 1855. 2s.’

*Vide* your diary for date, and see to whom you write

## “PONNY” MAYHEW

humorously; it was before you were honoured with the intimacy and confidence, not to say respect and esteem, of

“S. B.”\*

On the 11th July of this year (1868), “Ponny” Mayhew stood the Staff a dinner at the “Albion,”† “*pour fêter son Cinquantaine*,” as he expressed it, for he would, as Shirley remarked, now and then let his bad French get the better of him. Shirley was, as usual, the life and soul of the party, providing a birthday ode which du Maurier sang to a nondescript melody of his own manufacture.‡ It ran as follows and is eloquent of the high estimation in which Horace was held :—

“A health to our Ponny, whose birthday we  
The cheer shall be loud, and the cup shall be deep.  
We drain it with old supernaculum§ trick,  
And we heartily hail him no end of a Brick.

“Is he perfect? why no, that is hardly the case;  
If he were, the *Punch* Table would not be his place.  
You all have your faults—I confess one or two—  
And we love him the better for having a few.

“But compared to us chaps, he’s an angel of light,  
And a nimbus encircles his caput so white.  
Our jolly old hermit! the worst we can say  
Is to call him a slave to wine, women, and play.

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\* *Vide* Frith’s “Reminiscences.” † From Mr. Silver’s notes.

‡ In “The True Story of *Punch*” Shirley is said to have sung as well as written it, but this is a mistake.

§ Literally “on the nail,” from an old custom of concluding a drink by reversing the glass and showing that no more was left than would rest on the thumb-nail.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

“ Good things in their way, and much better, you know,  
Than going the length that some gentlemen go—  
I won't mention names, but if law had it's right,  
A respectable party were smaller to-night.

“ He never did murder, like—never mind whom,  
Nor poisoned relations, like—some in this room ;  
Nor deceived young ladies, like—men whom I see,  
Nor even intrigued with a gosling—like me.

“ No ; black are our bosoms, and red are our hands,  
But a model of virtue our Ponniboy stands ;  
And his basest detractors can only say this,  
That he's fond of the cup, and the card, and the kiss.

“ A warm-hearted fellow—a faithful ally,  
Our Bloater's Vice-Regent o'er *Punches* gone by ;  
He's as true to the flag of the White Friars still,  
As when he did service with Jerrold and Gill.

“ His health in a bumper ! ‘ Old ’ Ponny—a fib ;  
What's fifty ? A baby. Bring tucker and bib.  
Add twenty ; then ask us again, little boy,  
And till then may your life be all pleasure and joy ! ” \*

Then Keene sang “ There were Three Ravens,” with tears in his deep bass voice. This was followed by Shirley improvising a new version of an old convivial chorus :—

“ Here's to the writer of horrible books,  
And the rhyme may remind you of one, Shirley Brooks !  
*Viva la compagnie,*” etc., etc.

And the entertainment concluded by Shirley proposing the health of Mark Lemon, not merely as a good Editor, who never snubbed his writers, but as a comfortable, corpulent personage, whom there was no fear of mistaking for anybody else, as the man did who,

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\* *Vide* “ The True Story of *Punch*,” by Joseph Hatton in *London Society*, 1875.

ACTING EDITOR OF "PUNCH"

when asked whether he knew the Siamese twins, replied "I rather think that I've met one of them, but I forget exactly which."

In August Shirley was in London acting *locum tenens* for Mark Lemon.

S. B. TO PERCIVAL LEIGH.

"BEDFORD HOTEL,  
"COVENT GARDEN,  
"W.C.

"August 11th, 1868.

"MY DEAR PROFESSOR,

"I have a line from my wife, who mentions that Mrs. Leigh, your brother and yourself, were kind enough to meet her, and put her in the right way for the voyage. I had much compunction in telegraphing, for I thought I might detain your brother later in S'hampton than he would care to stay, but I ventured to trespass on his kindness, and I am heartily obliged to you all. It was well, I fancy, that my folks went early. I shall hear to-morrow.

"The above will be my best address, the British Workman having extruded me from my house, in which I linger to write this. But I shall sleep in better air than that of my dear old Covent Garden. Yet the leads on the top of the club after dark, and with cool drink, are not a bad place for a smoke, and we see many fireworks for nothing.

"Please remember that I shall be on duty for a month, in Mark's absence, and send me anything of suggestion, without boring yourself, that occurs. The paper will gladly pay telegraph, should anything occur at a late moment to you.

"Once more, my kindest regards to Mr. and Mrs.



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

Fred. I have been telling his workhouse story with the greatest success to the 3 people left in London.

“ Du Maurier a 4th child, a princess.

“ Ever yours,

“ S. B.”

This year the *Gentleman's Magazine* first appeared as a *shilling serial* under the editorship of Joseph Hatton, the proprietors being Messrs. Bradbury and Evans. Shirley was from the beginning a contributor, and afterwards, in Hatton's words, “ wrote some of the most charming of all the charming essays which appeared in those early days of the new series, when the magazine could afford to pay writers well.”

It was somewhere about this time that he struck up a friendship, which lasted to the end of his life, with a lady who has since made herself famous. Mrs. Jopling Rowe was then Mrs. Frank Romer.

“ I had,” she writes to me, “ just returned from Paris after a residence of four years, where during the last sixteen months of my stay I had commenced my artistic training under Monsieur Chaplin. We were on a visit to my husband Frank Romer's parents, in St. John's Wood. I, my husband, and my two little boys. In those days it was a delightful treat to be invited to take tea at the old Bedford Hotel, Covent Garden, where one would invariably meet such celebrities as Thackeray, Mark Lemon, Shirley Brooks, and a host of lesser lights. It was here I was introduced to Shirley Brooks. He was delightful to talk to, brilliant and helpful. You at once felt at your ease with him, his kindness was unbounded. You had only to mention incidentally that you wanted to read

## A HELPING HAND

such and such a book, when he would either lend it to you himself, or go out of his way to borrow it for you.

“ About that time, I had utilized a pretty maid as model. She had plenty of spare moments, as the family were at the seaside, and nothing gratified her vanity more than being painted by me. It turned out rather a pretty little picture, and I sent it for exhibition to a small gallery called the Corinthian. This called forth the following letter from Mr. Brooks :—

S. B. TO MRS. F. ROMER (MRS. JOPLING ROWE).

“ ‘ BEDFORD HOTEL,

“ ‘ *Sunday, November 14th.*

“ ‘ MY DEAR MRS. ROMER,

“ ‘ A friend of mine, who writes on art in the *Observer*, was going the other day to the Corinthian Gallery, so I bade him *Observer* your picture. He says, to-day, “ Among the contributors best known in Art are so-and-so, and so-and-so ; Miss L. Romer, with a neatly executed single half-figure, No. 240.”

“ ‘ It is hardly worth mention to you, but it is an excuse for wishing you many happy returns of the day on which you receive this, and all sorts of success in your profession.

“ ‘ Very faithfully,

“ ‘ SHIRLEY BROOKS.

“ ‘ Mrs. F. Romer, Jun.’ ”

This was very characteristic of Shirley’s thoughtfulness. Hard-pressed as he always was, he was never too busy to write to any young friend who might chance to need a word of encouragement.

Nor was his a merely perfunctory solicitude to be satisfied by a note dashed off and done with. When once his interest was aroused he continued to bear

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

about in his over-crowded mind the needs of his young friends. We all know that Mrs. Jopling Rowe has "arrived," but she is not too proud to own that Shirley was the good fairy who made the uphill road easier for the Mrs. Frank Romer of those days. Here is a letter which speaks for itself :—

S. B. TO MRS. F. ROMER (MRS. JOPLING ROWE).

"MY DEAR MRS. FRANK ROMER,

"This note is *only* to show you that I am bearing your wishes in mind. I have been asking Mr. O'Neil (one of the Associates) about the Royal Academy. He says (but I may be telling you only what you know) that the first thing is for a candidate to draw a large (imperial paper size) copy of an *ancient statue*. This is sent to the Keeper (Charles Landseer, whom I know well), and it is submitted to a council which meets to judge such things. A letter from some 'known' person, introducing the student, accompanies it. I am told that, if you ever think of sending, *my* humble name is enough for you. If approved as of good promise, the sketch will suffice to make the executant a *Probationer*, and she is admitted for 3 months, during which time she must do *another* from the antique. If this is as good as the first, or at all events affords promise, she is made a *Student*. *No fees*. Possibly you know all this, but as I did not, I send my newly acquired learning.

"Ever yours,

"SHIRLEY BROOKS."

"The 'No fees,'" Mrs. Jopling Rowe writes, "was purposely underlined as we were at that time in the unpleasant position of not possessing a farthing of our own. In the meantime I was working away in my

## A PRETTY MODEL

temporary home, chiefly using my bedroom as my studio."

Then the young student must be introduced to his friend, the celebrated painter, and he arranges a visit.

In the course of the drive to Mr. Frith's house, Shirley remarked on the pretty looks and nice manner of Mrs. Romer's "model" maid, who had opened the door to him.

"It annoys me," he said, "if I am discourteously treated at the threshold of a friend's door. I remember once calling on someone, and the maid in her rudest manner told me he was not in, and shut the door in my face. I felt I must be revenged upon her somehow, so I returned after an interval of five minutes, rang the bell, and in my meekest manner mildly said, 'Did I say he was?'"

The visit to the celebrated Royal Academician resulted in unexpected and, as it proved, very sound advice.

"Don't go to the Academy Schools," he said, "you have been taught on a different method, and you might lose your originality if you began all over again. Go on working as you are doing—by yourself."

"And," naïvely writes Mrs. Rowe, "having asked his advice, I did a strange thing. I followed it."

Nor was the introduction of the student to the painter the end of Shirley's interest in the matter. The following Monday he writes that he must see her and talk over the advice which Mr. Frith had given. If the young artist could not go to see him, the busy

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

journalist would make it his business to go to see her. Of course, the young artist made his convenience hers and was well rewarded. First he enlarged upon all the encouraging things that Mr. Frith had said to her. And then, in the most delicate manner, he said he wanted her to paint his portrait whenever she felt inclined to undertake it, and in the meantime there was five pounds for canvases, paints and brushes which, of course, were serious items when a purse had little or nothing in it !

A little later he acts as godfather to a little poem she had written, "*Lux e Tenebris*," and writes :—

S. B. TO MRS. FRANK ROMER (MRS. JOPLING ROWE).

"MY DEAR MRS. FRANK,

"I was just going to write to you. Firstly, I have the pleasure of informing you that your poem will appear in the April number of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and I hope you will not much disapprove of a verbal alteration or two which I have ventured on merely on technical grounds. I have desired that the earliest possible number may be posted to you. Secondly, I doubt whether I shall have the pleasure of seeing you to-morrow, because, unless the wind walks round again into the bitter East, I propose to go to Crawley for three or four days for a little air. I am as stupid as any old owl, between being in the house and taking morphia. But I want particularly to see your pictures, and to be of any use I can in the way of suggesting title, quotation, or aught that may be of use, and as soon as I come up, I will, if you will allow me, call in Greville Place. Lastly, I should like to hear how you like the look of your verses, etc., and so

MRS. JOPLING ROWE

if you send me a line to the George Hotel, Crawley, it will be very welcome. Lastly, again,

“ Believe me,

“ Ever yours sincerely,

“ SHIRLEY BROOKS.

“ Mrs. Frank Romer, Jun.

“ P.S.—You will see me as your companion in the *Magazine*. I have done ‘The Alchemist,’ but I don’t know that it is readable. I daresay not, for as I said, I am an *owl*.”

Of course, he remembers to send a copy of the *Magazine* :—

DITTO TO DITTO.

“ MY DEAR MRS. FRANK,

“ I send you the *G.M.* by this or next (to-night’s) post, as I daresay it may not be sent up from Fleet Street. You are in good company—see the article on Sir Walter Scott, by my old friend Carruthers, whose son married Miss Laidlaw. I am here, Mrs. Lemon would not let me go to the hotel, and I shall be here until Saturday afternoon.”

Then follows a cheque for two guineas.

“ It is not much, but little fishes are sweet ; why they make it payable at Albany Street, Heaven only knows, and won’t tell.”

If he had enjoyed a book himself he never found it too much trouble to hand it on to a friend.

DITTO TO DITTO.

“ MY DEAR MRS. FRANK,

“ Not at all. I like to be reminded of a promise—that is, by one to whom I meant to keep it. That is a virtuous sentiment !

“ ‘ The Revolution ’ is in three rather large volumes.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

These I propose to leave in a parcel for you, on Wednesday, at the 'Bedford,' on my way to the dinner. But as such a parcel would be heavy for one fair arm, I have made up the books separately (*numbered*, mind) so that you can fetch them away, one by one, as convenient. I would have saved you this trouble, by sending them by the Parcels' delivery, but they knock books about abominably, and I know you are, like myself, too fond of books to treat them roughly. It is not a work to be read in a hurry; take your time about it, and if, which is most unlikely, I want a volume before you return them, I will send for it. Yes, read it leisurely, for the pictures are too elaborate to be hastily dismissed. I am sure you will be delighted. I have just glanced through the 3rd volume and it has all the old power for me. There are to be 30 volumes of the series! Haven't my folks (thanks to my instructions) covered them well? This is a 'monograph' which I take to mean an essay on one subject only, and it will not be if I say more than that

"I am, ever yours faithfully,  
"S. B."

The record of 1868 may close with three letters to Percival Leigh, chiefly on *Punch* matters.

S. B. TO PERCIVAL LEIGH.

"BEDFORD HOTEL,  
"COVENT GARDEN,  
"Monday, 22nd.

"MY DEAR P. L. OR UNCLE PERCY,  
"I got a note from Mark (who is *better*, and will I hope run up), but in it he mentions that in looking over *P.P.* yesterday, he thought it best to 'remove' your notice on the *Winchester Mayor*, as *personal*. I thought it a well-merited smack in the eye for a humbug, but of course M. L. is the House of Lords,

## DR. PUSEY AND "MISS METHODIST"

so you'll know why it is out. The 'Gas and Soap' merely stand over for want of room, and of course will appear in our next. I gave you so much trouble on Saturday that I seem to owe you these explanations.

"Plenty of news now, Warsaw, Austria and Hungary, Russia and Sardinia, Irish Americans and Prince, etc., etc.

"My address is the 'Bedford' till further notice.

"Ever yours,

"S. B.

"My child is better, and to-day they go to Crawley for a week."

In the following letter reference is made to the fact that Dr. Pusey had appealed for sympathy to the Wesleyan Conference and been rebuffed. The cartoon was entitled "Rejected Addresses," and represented the Doctor paying court to Miss Methodist.

"*Dr. Pusey.* 'And, my dear young lady, if I could induce you and your friends to look kindly upon my proposal——'"

"*Miss Methodist.* 'But you can't, Sir. I don't want to go to church at all; and if I did, I'm sure I wouldn't go with you.'"

The "Abergele horror" refers to the appalling railway accident on the Chester and Holyhead railway, in which an express train running into a van containing petroleum caused thirty-four deaths.

DITTO TO DITTO.

"BEDFORD HOTEL,

"August 24th.

(postmark, 1868.)

"MY DEAR PROFESSOR,

"All is serene. Mark went off on Tuesday, and states that he is very happy. If you like to write to



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

him, Mrs. Champion's, Barmouth, is the address. You will see that your idea of the subject was that of the council, but I don't think that J. T. has got the right likeness of Pusey. I am the only person in London, and I am very dull, and have a bad cold. Thanks, my folks are at S. Brelade's, and quite well, though my report might have been very different, for as my wife was mounting a char-a-banc, the fools drove on, and she fell, and that she did not get her legs broken was a miracle. However, in a week of such a horror as that of Abergele an 'escape' is hardly a thing to write about. All medical men tell me that the deaths must have been instant from suffocation, and painless, and it is a comfort to believe it. Kindest regards to your sister and brother.

“ Ever yours,  
“ S. B.

“ *I writ the 'Polite Election.'*  
“ P. Leigh, Esq.”

DITTO TO DITTO.

“ 49 KING'S ROAD, BRIGHTON,  
“ *Sunday.*

“ MY DEAR PROFESSOR,

“ Thanks for the 'D.' I think your notice of M. L. exactly what should be said. The regular critic, of course, wanted to show his own cleverness—and showed none. The misprints are pleasing, but I see them in other articles than yours, and I suppose the subscribers like them. Were I you, and cared about it, I would write a day or two earlier, and have my proofs. Brighton is crammed full of the swell mob, and gay in its d—d way. But we shall come up on Wednesday, and I hope to see you at dinner on that

“ 15 DECISIVE BOTTLES OF THE WORLD,”

day. They want me to dine at 3, being Sunday, but  
'not for Joseph,' says I, and goes to a restoorang.

“ Ever yours,

“ S. B.

“ I have no antelopes ; excuse this wild sheet.

“ Creasy's Book\* reminds me of an idea,

The ' 15 Decisive Bottles of the World,'

Celebrated drinks—Alexander—Socrates—

and so on. Let you and me make a list together some  
night over a 16th.”

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\* Sir Edward Creasy's "Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World."

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

divers monies in hand, £50 with M. L., a lot at 198 Strand, and some at 55 Parliament St. I enter the year with much more than I have ever had, *D.G.* Many calls on it, however."

Now, for the first time, he insures his life to the tune of £4,000, and apparently but just in time, for, from an entry in red ink later on in the year, we learn that he is roughly reminded that he cannot expect to attain to old age. It is a sort of provisional notice to quit, in the near future, the life out of which he has got as much happiness as most, but from which he is not over loth to depart, having learned like a wise man to anticipate the time when he must make up his mind to take his last journey.

On January 1st he is "reading the edifying works of Thomas Browne," and remarks "he nobly steals from Rabelais."

On January 2nd he is annoyed that Tenniel finds he cannot do the cut he has "suggested," and has done a "happy new year" one instead. "I think these things twaddle, and that *P.* should be more incisive."

"*Jan. 3rd.*

"Went through accounts and compared them with *E.*'s. She has had £600 last year, perhaps a little more, and has managed admirably. I have counted up outlay in hard cash—see last page in diary for '68. This shows £1,225. Fred Evans called about a par. in new *P.* about Tennyson and Moxon, which he thinks calculated to do *B. & E.* mischief, and asked whether I thought it might be removed. As *M. L.* recognizes the right of the firm to make business objections, I thought he

## DISESTABLISHMENT OF IRISH CHURCH

might go to Stacy about it. Wrote M. L. thereon. . . . At 6.30 to dine at Frith's. No one else except Parkinson and Harold Bellew. Yet rather a pleasant evening. Looked at Doré's 'Paradise Lost'—very little that is good. Talked most to Sis, who lent me a thing called the 'Idealist,' with poetry of her own, which is singularly good. . . . We all laughed over the Bummer der Breitmann."

" Jan. 4th.

" In the night my nose bled fluently. I didn't know it, but fancied I had a bad cold, nor did I discover it, until after I had taken in E.'s tea. But for accidentally looking at the bed I should have denied the story—which may be worth note, therefore."

" Jan. 5th.

" Dined at home, E. went with Amy to hear, for the first time, Dickens read 'Nancy,' *inter alia*, and came home by no means impressed."

" Jan. 6th.

" Smallish meeting. I suggested the cut, a protest that we disfranchise, I mean destroy, the Irish Church, for the sake only of justice, not to please the assassins and priests.\*"

" Jan. 7th.

" Some cold beef, and at 9 to Edward Levy's †, where a great revel was held. The place fitted up as a Music Hall, and the daintiest real bar, at which Harriette

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\* The new Ministry was pledged to introduce a Bill for the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Protestant Church of Ireland. The cartoon represents Gladstone sacrificing the Irish Church to satisfy the Roman Priesthood and to pacify the Irish murderers.

† Now Lord Burnham.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

Levy, Matilda, and another young lady stood all night, dispensing iced cup, much needed, for the weather was hot, and the rooms were crowded. Singing and other performances till 12, then capital supper in two rooms. In addition to the usual food, hot kidneys, etc., as at a Hall. Expected to be bored, but wasn't, and knew everybody almost. Made acquaintance with Mrs. T. Chappell, and young Montagu, the actor, both of whom I like. Took Mrs. Boucicault to supper, and showed her every attention, for auld lang syne and other reasons. Emily had a waltz with Fred Evans. Smoke, and I sat talking to Sothern and other men. When it was a good deal after two, I had no particular wish to come away. Got a cab without difficulty. We said good-night, E. and I, at  $\frac{1}{4}$  to 4, a rare hour with me now.

“ This bit of spite appeared a few days later. It was natural that a beastly ‘ correspondent ’ should write it, but I was not pleased to see it copied into the *Express*, which is respectable. The fellow was not there—as is seen by what he says about the garden, which was not covered in, or used.

“ ‘ An extraordinary party was given last week by a Jewish gentleman who is well known in the metropolitan circles. His large garden was covered over, and made to represent the place of amusement known as the “ Alhambra.” His wife presided at a drinking-bar, made to resemble the original ; and the dancing, the tables here and there, and the groups were likewise on the Leicester-square model. This is too much even for the literary flatterers upon whom wealth has a peculiar influence ; and the intense vulgarity of the notion excites general contempt.’—*Bury Post*.”

Further details of this amusing entertainment are given in the following letter :—

## A NOTABLE ENTERTAINMENT

S. B. TO PERCIVAL LEIGH.

" 6 KENT TERRACE,

" REGENT'S PARK,

" N.W.

" Jan. 9th, 1869.

" MY DEAR PROFESSOR,

" When Cato entered the theatre—but you know all about that. I hope that when you entered the ball-room the dancers ceased the Mazurka and demanded a recitation from 'Caliban on Setebos.'

" The following recital may amuse you. Young Edward Levy, of the *Telegraph*, and his beautiful wife (formerly Harriet\* Webster), 'giv'd a party,' like 'Dat Bummer der Breitmann,' on Thursday. Wishing to vary the monotony of such things, and having a good deal of acquaintance among actors and amateurs, they fitted up their rooms (in Woburn Place) like a *Music Hall*, with appointments, big bills on the walls, a stage, long tables, etc., and E. Levy 'took the chair' like a presiding landlord. Then, all the songs, etc., were *burlesques* of (I may say satires upon) the Music Hall performances, but good in themselves, especially Louise Keeley in a sailor's pea-jacket, singing a nautical song. Byron with 2 boy-dogs, who, with vast pretence by him, did nothing; and Albert Levy, with a capital caricature of the Great Vance. But the gem was the daintiest 'bar,' fitted up with perfect accuracy (to a beer engine), but so elegant, with coloured bottles, flowers, etc., that if you had seen it, you never would have gone into Fisk's again. At this presided as barmaids, all night, 3 of the prettiest women, Mrs. Levy, Matilda, and another, in Watteau dresses, and they served you with iced cup out of silver bowls. Splendid

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\* Properly " Harriette."

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

supper, in two rooms, in the ordinary way (I think no sweets, nor similar abominations), boar's head, game, raised pie, etc., but—to keep up the *Hall*—chops, welsh rarebits, and kidneys. I had the latter, and a potato, better than any I have ever had, except at Evans's. All the folks, about 90, I think, knew one another, or mostly, and I never saw so many pretty faces in one house. Lindsay Sloper, Benedict, and Madame Sherrington's husband (she sang) saw to the music. Then smoke for the men, and dancing for the women and boys. Du Maurier fell in love seven times, and was in the eighth when his wife bore him away. I did the same in a milder degree, but concealed it from my wife, so she let me stay till 3. Altogether, it was an original business, and a grand success,—and I was not bored once. There, if your revel was as good, 'here are in all *two* worthy voices gained to dissipation.'

"Kindest regards to all. Lord bless you. Don't come up. London is as warm as May, and as dirty as one of Dante's hells; you'll remember which.

"Ever,  
"S. B."

Montagu Williams records that Shirley caused much amusement at this party by playing the part of the dissatisfied spectator, who is always picking holes in performers and performance.

"*Jan. 8th.*

"Up at 9.30 (after the Levy's party), none the worse, but not much inclined to work or go out, but did both. Had promised Cecil to take him, for the first time, to the Tower. He was not very well, but eager to go, so we went. Rail to Moorgate Street, cab to near the Tower. The usual walk round. I am not sure that I had seen the chapel, which has been restored, and the

## “ YOUNG LINLEY SAMBOURNE ”

small armoury has been greatly increased. After the regalia and the prisons, we walked to Birch's, where I gave him refreshments, and to rail, home by  $\frac{1}{2}$  p. 4, so I had not overdone it for him. But he was still unwell, and E. began to think it possible scarlet fever, now much about. However, he was better next day. This kind of child is always making me anxious, while cubs never have anything the matter with them.”

On Jan. 9th, he records : “ Young Linley Sambourne, artist, called ; he is to do Essence initials.” These had been done by Sir John Tenniel, and Charles Bennett until the latter's death in 1867. Bennett had put into them some of his finest work and, until Mr. Sambourne came along, had had no worthy successor. Later on he alludes to “ Sambo,” and adds, “ this is Linley Sambourne, the clever young *Punch* artist, who has been and will be very useful,” a prophecy that all who understand the superb decoration of a page know to have been more than amply justified.

On Jan. 11th someone else was prophesying and, as events have proved, also prophesying rightly :—

“ A most gratifying letter from Frith about poor little Mrs. F. Romer. He has seen her work and says she has remarkable powers, enough with industry to make her well to do, perhaps famous, and he adds much more. I am very glad to have been the means of getting her such encouragement—wrote him thereon.”

“ *Jan. 12th.*

“ Tenniel has done my big cut nobly, on a double block—‘ Gladstone Sacrificing the Irish Church to Justice, not to Papists and Assassins.’ This cut should make a sensation.”



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

“ Jan. 13th.

“ E. rowed me for making jokes with Mrs. Sothern, as unbecoming ‘ at my age.’ Something in that.”

“ Jan. 15th.

“ To Covent Garden Theatre, and bought, as last year, a box for the pantomime. They won’t give anything now, yet it is churlish, considering how well *Punch* serves them. M. L. and I were both refused at Drury Lane. All managers nearly are vulgar tradesmen here—in Paris they are better. But it does not matter, once a year.”

“ Jan. 16th.

“ Poor E. suffering with rheumatism in shoulders. Rubbed her with liniment, and so to bed.”

“ Jan. 18th (the boys having gone to school).

“ Letter from Sims Reeves, who says, ‘ How splendidly you are helping me (about the Musical Pitch, now fighting), and I thank you from the bottom of my heart.’\* D. at home. House beastly quiet ; we miss the boys, of course, more than they miss us. I hope so.”

“ Jan. 19th.

“ Thanks from Robertson, dramatist. And dear old Sims Reeves, in return for services for which he again thanks me, sends me a ring, emeralds and brilliants, set clear. I do so many good-natured things without even thanks, that these recognitions by him (I have had two others) are the more pleasant. Wrote him. . . .

“ Quite a day of gifts, for in addition to the ring, there came to me from H. Dixon ‘ Her Majesty’s Tower,’ and from Macmillan ‘ Miss Martineau’s Sketches,’ and Maclaren’s book, and [Emily calling on

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\* *Vide* “ A Jarring Note,” *Punch*, Jan. 16th, p. 20.

## HARRIET MARTINEAU

Mrs. Bensusan, was on parting surprised at having a little gold or gilt box slipped into her hand."

Harriet Martineau's "Biographical Sketches" had just been republished, edited by Mr. (afterwards Sir) J. R. Robinson, and Shirley, as I learn from the following letter kindly lent me by Mr. George Dunlop, was prompt, in his review of the book in the *Illustrated London News*, to make some ingenious emendation.

(SIR) J. R. ROBINSON TO S. B.

" ' DAILY NEWS ' OFFICE,

" LONDON,

" Jan. 25th, 1869.

" MY DEAR SIR,

" I am much obliged to you for the correction in Miss M.'s work. On the whole, though the suggestion you make is ingenious, I will alter the 'd' to 'h' instead of reading it 'dad.' I have had a great deal of trouble with the work, as the material was in all sorts of printers' errors, etc. It was not easy, moreover, to give descriptive marginal notes with pages that are so small. I could get no one to take the slightest interest in the matter. Indeed, I was thought to be in a mistake. One impartial critic says they are 'worthless,' but I am glad to see from your note that you do not agree with him. The work will be out of print in a few days and another edition will be got ready at once. Macmillan has behaved most fairly—for one of his nationality, I should say most *generously*—to Miss M. in the matter.

" Yours, dear Sir,

" Very truly,

" J. R. ROBINSON.

" S. Brooks, Esq."

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

On the publication of his review Shirley sent a copy to the aged authoress, and received the following reply at the hands of her niece :—

MISS JANE MARTINEAU TO S. B.

“ THE KNOLL,  
“ AMBLESIDE.  
“ *Feb. 2nd, 1869.*

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ It is true, as you inferred, that my aunt is unable to bear the fatigue of much writing with her own pen, but she cannot let such kindness as you have shown slip by without some acknowledgment. I am, therefore, glad to be asked by her to send you her best thanks for your letter with its enclosure. She begs me to say that she had read your notice in the *Illustrated News* with pleasure and *great* gratification, without knowing who had written it, and now of course your letter adds to the interest. My aunt is pleased to hear about your two sons. Your mention of Mr. Lucas brings back many recollections to my aunt's mind. She felt great interest in him, but never heard particulars about him latterly ; that he lost his mind was all she knew. The bringing out of the ‘Sketches’ has been the means of her having the pleasure of making close acquaintance with Mr. Robinson, to whom she feels grateful for all he has so kindly done for her. My aunt is still weak after her late more serious attack of illness. Her kind regards,

“ And believe me,

“ Yours truly,

“ JANE S. MARTINEAU.

“ Shirley Brooks, Esq.”

## MRS. STOWE AND LORD BYRON

in other days—to the affectionate nature, the varied accomplishments, and the indisputable sincerity of him who now lies in Ardwick Cemetery, near Manchester.”

“ Jan. 27th.

“ M. L. in Scotland, so took the chair—a full attendance, and we hammered out a good cut on the Overend and Gurney case, in which, by the way, the two Gurneys, and four other eminent City gentlemen were to-day ‘Committed for trial’ by the Mayor and Gabriel. ‘Queer times,’ as J. W. Davison says in a note.”

The cut represented a ruined shareholder saying to his daughter, “Yes, they are committed for trial; but we, my child, *to hard labour for life.*”

“ Jan. 31st.

“ At  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 5 we went to d. with Crowdy—short notice, to eat canvassbacks. No one else. Long and pleasant chat with him, over smoke. His conviction—we spoke among a hundred things of Lord Byron—is that the cause of separation was B.’s incest with Mrs. L. Told me that Murray had a box of letters of B.’s, deposited by her, on which he advanced sums amounting to £500 or so, and offered on her death, she being poor, to give up his claims on the chance of the box containing something worth having. But the daughter would not hear of it—the letters must not be touched, and asked time to satisfy claim; on which he very generously gave up both box and debt. Should like to hear the opinion of a distinguished literary friend on this story.”

“ Curious this,” he adds in a note on Nov. 8th, “for later in the year Mrs. Stowe, in *Macmillan*, proclaimed the story, and for months there was a fierce row. Now, people do not believe the charge.”

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

was all. Yates was voted vulgar for calling out to Lawson to get out of a private box, but I really saw only a joke, but am told he was vicious, Y., at listening to the story of success when he had been d—d. He had better, perhaps, have stayed away. Sir B. and Lady Lennard, Sir W. Fergusson, Arthur and Mrs. Lewis, Mrs. Steele, Mrs. Fitzwilliam, Mrs. C. Matthews, Mrs. Burnand, V. Prinsep, Bancrofts, Hare, Addison, Miss Herbert (was introduced to her), Walter Lacy, Sefton Parry, P. Simpson, Robertson and Miss Madge\* (engaged, I think, to Kendal), Chippendales, Hollingshead, Clarke, Boucicault, Albert Levy, Montagu and a lot. Rather 'mixed,' as a body might say, but we are too old to be hurt. Cigar in green room. Bed by 3. E. said she had been bored—I don't think I was."

" Feb. 11th.

" Not much concerned to work. At  $\frac{1}{4}$  to 4 at Grindlay's, where were ready for us Low, Mr. Thomas, engineer to the L. C. & Dover, and a carriage. So to Low's—bad hills on that road—and dined at 5. Mrs. L.'s father came. After smoke came to the drawing-room some two-dozen members of a Book Society, and tea over, 'we' proceeded to discuss the question whether the Church of *England* ought to remain endowed. Low opened in the affirmative. The others were mostly Dissenters, and talked the usual old high-flown twaddle, and petty jeers, which I remember for 30 years. I did not mean to speak, but Low urged it so much that I said a few words about the value of the Church as a police, and the advantage of having in every parish one man bound to decency and honour. Likened the Dissenters to the servants (Dean Swift), with a common enemy,

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\* Mrs. Madge Robertson (now Mrs. Kendal).

## STORY OF THE DUKE OF SUSSEX

master and mistress. Very much bored, but sat it out—Low got his motion by 7 to 6. E. much fatigued and eager to get home, because of Rego, but we could not get off till the 11.14 train—wet—home by 12.15. I was glad to oblige L. by our going, but should have preferred dinner at 7, and no Dissenters.”

“ Feb. 18th.

“ Wrote Sala that Napoleon was a *failure* even in his own bloody and brutal profession—kicked out of Russia, Spain, France, and transported for life.”

“ Feb. 22nd.

“ Garrick at 5.30 to meet Sherard Osborne, who took me to Willis’s Rooms to dine with the Geographical Club. An interesting meeting. Sir Andrew Waugh in chair. Murchison’s wife having died, we drank her memory ‘in solemn silence.’ Somebody told me that when Sir Roderick was made a baronet, she said she wished she could die, that he might marry and have a successor. A pretty story, but I see the honour was given in 1866, when he was 74. Sat next to Lord Houghton, who had some good stories—said he heard the Duke of Sussex tell Parry (Arctic) in a hot room that the atmosphere was not like what he had left at the North, but must rather remind him of the South Pole. . . .

“ At 8 to British Institution, where the G. S. meet at present, and heard a long paper by Commander Davis, who was out with Captain Ross, on Antarctic discovery, and the place whence to observe the transit of Venus in 1882. Sir James Andersen was there, and the paper was amply discussed. . . . I did not stay for the last admiral. . . . Transit in 1882! Where shall I be? Transitted, perhaps—yet I am only  $\left. \begin{array}{l} 53 \\ 13 \end{array} \right\}$  — 66. As God will.”

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

" Feb. 24th.

" Heard from and wrote Sala. We throw away a deal of copy this way, yet it is pleasant, and one must have *some* amusement. I have little enough. Wrote *H. N.*\* Walked in, called 'Bedford,' saw L. Romer, who is prospering, and has a promise of £20 for a picture—I hope she will live to laugh at the pleasure with which she told this. On to Alsatia. I urged vehemently that the next cut, which will come when the country will be full of Gladstone's speech, should be on the Church, though we usually wait to let topics soak into the public mind. It was agreed to, but we had much trouble in hitting on a theme, so I suggested Protestantism, freed from chains, rising like an angel, or that one in the 'Hermit,' and delighting Ireland. Leigh d—d Protestantism, but something like my notion was agreed to."

The resulting cut was entitled, "The End of the 'Tempest,'" and represented Gladstone (as *Prospero*,) [with Ireland hanging on his arm,] disendowing and disestablishing "Protestantism," with the words, "Be free, and fare thee well."

In March, 1869, Shirley was down with a bad attack of gout, but, though confined to bed, he did not allow his work to suffer, having a great objection, in his own words, "to throwing other folks out of gear merely because I am so." The doctor treated him with morphia with the following result:—

" March 14th.

" In bed nearly all day, chiefly reading Ben Jonson, but up to dinner. Frith came, and Fred Evans. One

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\* *Home News.*

## STORY OF A LOST CHEQUE

On these nights had the oddest dream [morphia] that the name of the tea-fleet was called the *Shout*, and that there was war between the United States and some other power on the way from China. The *Shout* must go on its way to fight (having canister and gunpowder, but I think this facetiousness was when I was waking) and had got taken. I, who could be in all ships, and all over the world at once, goes to the American captain, and told him a young lady would break her heart if her lover, captain of the *Shout*, did not win. 'Wal,' he says, 'I guess I'll let him go, as you say it, and you've always been a friend to our nation, but he can't win the d—d race *now*.' Well, I said I thought he could, and the American would lend him a fast frigate to tow him up into his place, and range him with the others, and this the Yankee most good-naturedly did. *Aegri sumus*, but this is a little more coherent than most, and certainly has *pes* and *caput*."

*March 18th.*

"Had my hair cut—always a proof of convalescence, except once, of which I shall know nothing!"

*March 21st.* (At Crawley with the Lemons.)

"Slept well, sending myself off with some imaginary dialogue with an impossible widow, whose idea was given me by a description of an excessively possible one whom I met in the flesh on the Saturday. That was the way to get ideals."

*March 31st.*

"Slept elegantly, but dreamt I had to bury Reginald Deber, whose body was sent to me in a package to the *praetor* office, and I did it with the utmost decorum, and told my father thereof. There's a pretty kettle of mad stuff for you."

*April 12th.*

"Odd thing. Crawled upstairs to sign a cheque for



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

E. £12. Brought it down. Saw her take it from mantelpiece, in fact cautioned her not to smear it, as she was folding it. From that moment it vanished. I suppose it got among some of her letters, and was laid away by mistake. Fred Evans called to-day and informed me that Mr. Bradbury (William) died last night. So, 'is old Double (he *was* that) gone at last?' Well, when he had *Punch*, I had many civilities from him. He had the sense to know my value, and the grace to show it."

Touching the cheque, he records four years later in red ink :—

" I was nearly right. She put it into a novel, 'In Silk Attire,' where it was found by Reginald, Nov. 13th, 1873."

" April 13th.

" Duplex\* don't show—he has neuralgia—but might have sent a line. I go on taking his medicine, and am saturated with morphia, which makes me drunk. I suppose myself to be sober, but the night visions come with a curious double-ness. This won't do—so stop the morphia. But do my work, did 'N. in P.† with much ease in bed to-day, and write letters, so I suppose the will is dominant. Comes, introduced by George Russell, Mr. Marwood Tucker, a new editor of the *Globe*. Wants me. Could not see him, but sent him down a civil note—we'll see—but these Tories know nothing of newspaper work. E. saw him, and he made quite a fuss about a set of 'sketches' he has got from somebody—neat and washy, and not of the faintest use."

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\* The doctor.

† "Nothing in the Papers," the title of his weekly column in the *Illustrated London News*.

## ENCOURAGEMENT

Mrs. Romer's first picture in oils had failed to find a place on the walls of the Academy. Whilst its fate was still in the balance he had written with his customary thoughtfulness :—

S. B. TO MRS. F. ROMER (MRS. JOPLING ROWE).

*" Saturday.*

" MY DEAR MRS. FRANK,

" Thanks for kind enquiries. I have had rather a troublesome ten days of it, but am much better and hope to be all right very soon. I have been able to do my work regularly, so I suppose there was not a great deal really the matter, only the doctors are stronger than the fish that swallowed Jonah, and when they have got you down, they keep you down.

" I know not whether you have yet heard the fortune of your picture, but if it be the wrong way, you must be in no sort discouraged, for I heard yesterday they were 'slaughtering more mercilessly than usual.' Of course it will be a disappointment, but as Clarence says—

' That thee is sent accept in buxomness,  
The wrestling of this world asketh a fall,'

and you have, as you have been told by more competent authority than myself, the future in your own hands. But I will not anticipate what may not happen, only I wish you to arm yourself against any temporary ill-luck by conviction that it can only be temporary.

" Sir Edwin's great picture of 'Eagles Fighting Swans in a Scotch Lake' is described to me as the most splendid thing he has done for years. I saw a good many pictures—Leighton's are beautiful, especially one exquisite nymph rising from the sea, roses under

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

her feet, to meet the embrace of the Sun-god.\* It is perfect.

"Again thanks for thinking of me. I hope we shall soon meet and that I shall hear good news.

"Always yours faithfully,  
"SHIRLEY BROOKS."

Later, when Mrs. Romer had been asked to send the picture to an exhibition which had been arranged as a protest against Burlington House exclusiveness, she wisely asked Shirley's advice. This was his answer:—

S. B. TO MRS. F. ROMER (MRS. JOPLING ROWE).

(Whit-Tuesday, 1869.)

"MY DEAR MRS. FRANK,

"I should *not*, were I you, enter the ranks of the Rejected, when you are in the regiment of Postponed. At all events I would wait another year; 'the world is to him (or her) who knows how to wait.' Of course, there is such a thing as waiting too long, but you can perfectly well afford a pause. That is my opinion, and I fancy it will be that of the best of your friends. On Whit-Monday, yesterday in fact, I took the boys to the Academy. I feared a crowd, but it was a mild one, with ten times as many pretty faces as you see on an aristocratic day, and we managed very well. I have made up my mind that it is by no means a first-rate exhibition. There!

"We (*Punch*) dine at Hampton Court to-morrow, which will be pleasant if the weather holds up, but I have not much hope. As Benedict has sent us a couple of guinea stalls for the Rossini Mass in the afternoon, I shall try to hear that first—not that I know much about music (or anything else), but it is a thing to have done.

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\* Helios and Rhodes.

## GENEROSITY

“ But *this* is by

“ Mr. Brooks :—

“ ‘ If you were an invalid, and you went by Sir John Falstaff in the street, why ought you to be condoled with ? Because you would not have passed a good knight.’

“ I send you a photograph—I have no idea who it is, but the face is pretty, and you may like to have it. It was ‘ not to be given away,’ so I give it to you.

“ Ever yours faithfully,

“ S. B.”

“ *April 17th.*

“ Wrote the memorial of Mr. Bradbury for *Punch*. M. L. writes that ‘ W. B. is mightily touched thereby, and it *may* be remembered.’ May be ?”

The following refers to one of his many charities, of which he said little :—

“ *April 19th.*

“ The point is about the deserted boy, —, whom Mr. D. can get into a school for two years, if I will pay him from £26 to £30. It seems only humane to give the poor lad a start in life, so I assented, but wished the money to be paid by instalments—if one lets these folk know one has a shilling, they will grab at elevenpence, and look at the odd penny as if one was a churl to keep it.”

“ *April 21st.*

“ Where will our Courts of Law be built ? Heavy debate thereon last night, and Bob Lowe has a plan for getting to the Embankment. The lawyers oppose. But the clever cuss frightens the House with the £4,000,000 which he says the present Carey St. scheme will cost. Temple Bar must grin—it is not doomed

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

yet . . . . Dined *Punch*—pleasant evening. I gested the cut about the Law Courts.\* . . . bishop Manning remonstrates against my article in *Illustrated*.† I will go at him again."

[Note added in red ink : ]

"Did, in *Punch*—so there's half-a-million read the fray."

"April 27th.

"Looked into National Gallery, now entirely up to the nation's pictures. They are beautifully arranged, and it is odd to see in the 'great room' octagon, and other chambers, in which there used to be such a crowd of modern works, the calm old faces in two rows. Wrote Webster for an Adelphi by E. She says that while under morphia, of which fancy I took more than enough, I said unkind things. God knows I never meant, or was conscious of them. My principal remembrance is that of extreme confidence with her and all things. I did all my work all the time—and well. It is odd, if I wandered about at night I know I was a little mystified, yet I seem to remember it all, even now—they exaggerate a little perhaps, and I am usually so sedate that a

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\* The cut represented Father Thames begging Miss "Come, build by me, and be my love," but, as we know, she refused for any purpose.

† In this article Shirley had commented severely on the language of Archbishop Manning to a Fenian deputation. I followed up with an article in *Punch* entitled "An Illustration of an Archbishop," in the course of which he wrote: "In olden times Christian bishops helped Governments to suppress crime. In the districts in Ireland, red with assassination, were deprived of their Catholic spiritual authorities of religious rites until the murderers were in gaol, we should hear no more of 'agrarian outrages.'

## THE FRANK ROMERS

*excitement excited* more notice than a noisy person's would. However, E. knows that I never meant anything to pain her—I was a beast if I had."

" April 30th.

" At 3 to Burlington House, private view of the Exhibition, first time in its new and splendid quarters. Not, I think, a first-rate exhibition. Landseer noble. The usual mob of acquaintances. We shook hands with the B. of Oxford, who was looking ill. Princess Mary of Teck was being shown round by Leighton, the future President. Shook hands with a deal of talent."

In May the Frank Romers had established themselves in a new house and Shirley wrote :—

S. B. TO MRS. F. ROMER (MRS. JOPLING ROWE).

" 23rd May, 1869.

" MY DEAR MRS. FRANK,

" Accept my best congratulations on your once more having your own Lares and Penates about you. Nobody's gods are so pleasant as our own. I trust that you may not only have much comfort in your new abode, but that out of it may proceed such work as will ere long translate you up to a Studio, if that be more dignified than an *atelier*. *Mine* I call a *Den*, wherein I 'privily murder the innocent.' I dined at the 'Bedford' last night, but did not expect to see you in the circumstances. Allow me (and don't laugh—yes, do) to send you by post—it will either follow, or accompany this—a little book which may not be unacceptable to a young housekeeper. I am told that it is trustworthy, or as the slip-slop writers say, reliable. We have quite a library of such works . . . for the most part treated with contempt by the cook of the period.

" Rossini, of course, was a great composer, but, a

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

member of your husband's family once said of somebody else, 'Talent is not his forte.' Prefix 'sacred musical' and I believe that's the right verdict in the Rossini case. But I don't assume a right of judgment in *that* art. The 'Messe' will be puffed, of course. Again he is dead,\* and nobody's interests can be hurt by praising him. When you are settled, I shall walk over, some midday, or when most convenient to you, and congratulate you in person. I know the region quite well, but not Shrewsbury Road; what is it near, or what does it turn out of? Why don't I look at the map? says you. Because—or rather, I *have* looked and the road is not marked.

" 'Man is like Don Ferdinando, and cannot do more than he *can* do,' lines I never understood, and believe to be mis-quoted.

" No, I answer *d'avance*, I am not going to the Derby. I have been. Also, I do not care about the Thursday headache, for if one does not take too much, one may as well stay at home. One may come home sober from *anywhere* without spending three or four guineas, besides losing bets and temper. But I have Prophesied—see next *Punch*,† which I will send you. . . .

" Very faithfully,  
" SHIRLEY BROOKS."

DITTO TO DITTO.

" MY DEAR MRS. FRANK,

" Whether you have time or not, go down to Messrs. Agnew, 5 Waterloo Place, and see one of the finest Sir Joshuas you ever will see. They have just bought it, and it will be there for a few days only. It is a large work, a full-length portrait of Miss Johanna

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\* He had died in the preceding November.

† "*Punch's* Derby Day," May 29th, 1869, p. 217.

## DISRAELI'S POST-PRANDIAL BANTER

Leigh, who about 1775 married Mr. Lloyd, and afterwards one of the Beckfords. She is in a classic costume, sandals, etc., inscribing the happy Llo's name on a tree. Such a picture! Say I—say you are a friend of mine, which I am glad to believe is the truth. I am sure you will see a hundred better reasons than I can why you should be glad to have been told of this.

“ In haste,  
“ Ever yours,  
“ S. B.”

“ *May 1st.*

“ Heard from Sala, who *has* dedicated a book to me.\*  
New dress suit. In which, flowered and white-gloved, did I go to the Academy to dinner. Good many years since I first set boy's foot within their sacred walls, then those of Somerset House. Pleasant to have a good opportunity of looking at a few men of the day, among whom one wandered. Gladstone, Disraeli, Archbishop Tait, Lord Lawrence, Westbury, Chelmsford, Shaftesbury, Russell. Seated near Dr. Quain, head of the surgeons, Webster, artist. Hawkshaw, Horsley, Goodall, Ansdell, Durham—Millais, next table. Speeches a great bore, except Disraeli, who gave just the proper post-prandial banter. To be sure, nobody could hear anything else. Excellent dinner, well served. Pretty sight—the gas flashing up upon all the glitter and show at mention of the Queen. I had an elaborate Lewis behind me, ‘An Intercepted Love-letter,’ so I studied this during much of the spouting. Sir B. Phillips set me down at the G., where sat an hour, and home, where sat till near 1 when E. came, having been to Boucicault's play and supper,

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\* “ Rome and Venice.”



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

and a note had been sent to bid me to the latter, but I missed it somehow.

"Note.—Writ four lines on Landseer's Eagle\* picture, had them set up for *Punch*, and gave them to Sir E. as I came out."

"*May 2nd.*

"Another picture Sunday, for I had been asked by John Pender to come and lunch at 18 Arlington Street, and see his pictures. Went. Tom Agnew and Barlow there, and some more. Interesting house—sham Gothic. H. Walpole was born there—see about this. Lantern—handsome rooms. He has a wealth of pictures—there are 18 in the dining-room for which T. A. said he would gladly give £20,000. Two noble Landseers—one, Fox, Dead Deer, and Eagle—the other, Shepherd with Sheep Lost in Snow. Such a John Phillip, a splendid naked-legged brown girl, very handsome, putting a rose in her hair, as she sits on the ground, and looks into a little glass. I covet this. A glorious Stanfield—Waves on a great rock, and bird flying like spray. A Turner. Elmore's Man drawing curtain to show, I suppose, a faithless woman that her lover has been killed. Frith—Gleaner girl, landscape of it by Creswick. A sweet Etty—half-length woman. Millais' picture of Pender's two girls (they lunched) with the gold fish ;] and the lady relieving the Royalist in the tree—and others, and upstairs Phillip's great Spanish Wake and the dead child and mournful mother (this is to be engraved), and Holman Hunt, Cox, Collins, De la Roche (small and dainty), and many more. Really a fine show, and a good house, with a back view to B. Palace. A young Wm. Pitt in the hall, almost handsome, by Gainsborough."

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\* "The Swannery Invaded by Sea-Eagles."



REBUS LETTER FROM DU MAURIER TO SHIRLEY BROOKS  
IN THE POSSESSION OF THE BIOGRAPHER

STANFORD LIBRARIES

## A REBUS LETTER FROM DU MAURIER

*May 4th.*

“Wrote ‘N. in P.’ [“Nothing in the Papers”] a reed against unqualified critics in art.”

On May the 5th he writes: “Heard from Kiki\* (du Maurier), a note of symbols—very clever. This is ly worth recording because by one of those curious ances which occur to those who are on the look out : them, the letter itself was washed up to my feet, to speak, in an Oxford Street bookseller’s shop, just the nick of time to be here reproduced. I leave it the reader to decipher. Obviously it begins ‘My ar Brooks, I cannot hand you,’ and concludes ours (ewers) Kick-eye,’ but what is the translation the third line is more than I can discover.”

*May 7th.*

“A melancholy satisfaction in getting a most kind ter from poor Mary Munro.† He lives, and seems have a respite, but the doctor will not hold out hope ‘more than a few months.’ But he is in his new use, Villa de la Tourelle, and lies on a sofa on the trace, enjoys the lovely views, and even models a tle. If he is to die, as I wrote her to-day, in reply, e conditions could hardly be more merciful. She ks for *Punch* and papers. I should have thought such ings would have poured on them from Inverness. it I sent two *Punches*, and a paper (this next day), d I will take care he gets anything I think can amuse m. In contrast with the dying sculptor came wing, a living one, full of strength and hope, and th the same patronage, Sutherland, etc., that Munro d. Asked me to sit to him.”

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\* Pronounced Kickey.

† Alexander Munro died at Cannes two years later. He did ch of the stone-carving on the Houses of Parliament.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

" May 8th.

" Frith in ecstasies with something I have writ in the *Illustrated*, about critics and painters.\* ' Letters of Gold.' And they ask us to eat with them to-morrow. We have no engagement. Then Sala sends me a letter on the same subject, exactly in the opposite interest, declaring that painters ought to be demolished, that they are vain beasts, and half of them ought to be breaking stones. Replied."

\* \* \* \*

" Letter from Hills, that Sir E. was much pleased with my civility. Don't mind complimenting *him*, for he is a great man, and can do nothing in the world for me.

" May 11th.

" Such a capital sketch from Kiki of me, as Plantagenet, riding down a penny critic (on an ass) who has stabbed through the picture of a noted painter—allusion to my article in *Illustrated*."

" May 17th. (Whit-Monday.)

" Rather afraid of holiday crowd, but we took R. and C. to the Royal Academy. Many persons, but we could see all that we desired. Exceeding well-dressed crowd, and some very pretty faces, many more than on an aristocratic day. The middle class is begotten by the middle class, not by footmen and fiddlers, hence its good looks."

" May 19th.

" At 2 to S. James's Hall with E., Benedict having sent us two guinea seats. Rossini's ' Messe Solennelle.' Some of it very fine, and I think more devotional than the ' Stabat.' We left just before it was over. . . .

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\* *Vide* entry for May 4th.

## A GOOD STORY OF MEYERBEER

I walked to Waterloo, and so to Hampton Court—the 1st *Punch* ‘out’ this year. Clean and good d. at Mitre, as usual.”

Shirley, a thing very unusual with him, arrived too late for the soup. He said that as a rule concerts bored him, but that the “Messe” had almost persuaded him to be enough of a Christian to relish fine church music. Thereupon du Maurier told an amusing story of the composer. A certain musician had composed a “Mass” on Meyerbeer’s death:—

“*C’est très bien, monsieur,*” said Rossini, “*seulement c’est vous qui aurait dû mourir, et c’est Meyerbeer qui aurait dû faire la Messe!*” \*

“*May 19th.*”

“I suggested the cut, which was at once adopted—an American Falstaff. †

\* \* \* \*

“Cabman took up a friend, without asking my leave, so I docked sixpence and told him why. He seemed so unconscious of wrong, that I wished I had only blown him up—but next day a cabman tried to cheat Cecil of sixpence so all is well ‘on the average.’”

“*May 20th.*”

“E., considering that we must give a dinner and a crush, we issued some invitations for the former, and made out a list for the latter, whereby we discovered

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\* From Mr. Silver’s notes.

† Outrageous claims were being made on England in the *Alabama* business, and thus did Shirley try to solve the matter: “Sirrah,” says the Prince of Wales, “do I owe you a thousand pounds?” Sir John Falstaff: “A thousand pounds? Four hundred million! Thy love is worth four hundred million: thou owest me thy love.” But, as we know, America went for the dollars.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

that if we asked all our dear friends, and all came, we could muster 188—what a deal of love for two people. And I would stick on as many more of my own. O lor!”

“ *May 21st.*

“ E. gave Alderman, our clean cook, notice by reason that she dresseth herself too well, and the dinner too ill. The second, the real and sufficing cause, howsoever, be it said. Again writing that *Punch* Prophecy for the Derby, which sticks by me like the Essence of Parliament. P.— C.— is dead, 53. He wronged me in a money matter, but it was in his desperate flounders, and I have very long since forgiven that, and regretted that he would never write to me, ‘thick’ as we had been, from the hour the lawyers wrote to me. I have many pleasant memories of him. Never was a case in which a man flung away good cards so very madly, and all because of the drink. If there is anything to be done for — [his wife] I will be in it.”

And he was as good as his word. The dead man was a writer of some eminence and Shirley got up a memorial to Gladstone. This resulted in enough being granted out of the Literary Pensions Fund to pay the widow’s debts. It was the sort of “revenge” that Shirley enjoyed.

“ *May 26th.*

“ Burnand suggested the cut—a most admirable one — ‘The Emperor looking at the Urn, “*L’Homme qui Rit.*” ’

“ *May 30th.*

“ Mem. Heard a man telling a lady in the ‘Botanical’ that rhododendrons required watering every day, except Sunday! This is a fact. I must print it.”

“ *June 4th.*

“ Hobhouse,\* Lord Broughton, Byron’s friend, is

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\* John Cam Hobhouse.

## A MISUNDERSTOOD JOKE

dead. I have heard that he became a most 'arbitrary cove,' and that having told a servant to get a horse shod (in a rage), the man thought he said 'shot,' and preferred to do this to asking his haughty Lord whether he had been heard aright."

" June 5th.

" Old Pater has taken *au serieux* a letter Burnand sent me, mentioning his leaving the play before it was over—a palpable joke. Wrote Pater on Sunday—how can he be so absurd? The longer I live the less safe I perceive any joke, unless you stand by the man, laugh loud, clap him on the back, and say it's only your fun."

" June 8th. (Reginald and Cecil were now at Isleworth International College.)

" Cecil, by appointment overnight, made with the approbation of Rego and of Britton, C.'s friend, met in single combat Steinthal, formerly his fast friend also, but who with two others (Burchardt and Stöhr, all Germans), has been persecuting him of late until his life was made miserable. He got well pummelled, but is understood to have fought so well with his foe that the others thought he was winning. They stopped the fight after 5 rounds, 3 minutes, when the combatants rushed off to cleanse away the gore. I suppose I ought to be in a great rage, and manifest it, but I shall manifest it without feeling it. E. behaved excellently discreetly, lecturing everybody, from the Doctor down to Steinthal, but not demanding vengeance. Next day Steinthal wrote for *my* pardon, saying also that Cecil demanded the fight. Adds that he, Steinthal, has been 'punished.' The justice whereof, as regards the fight, is not clear, but he richly deserved it for the persecution. Cecil is brought home, looking as one who has fought. Now that he has shown his



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

mettle, I suppose there will be no more trouble, but if there is, I shall remove him. Rego, who really acted with the best motives, seems to have caught it all round, and to have felt strong enough in his motives to be dignified, which I like. These boys! But it is the lot of most fathers, I suppose, to be worried some way, and, thank God, ours do nothing *wrong*."

" June 14th.

"Dear Aleck Munro\* sends me a long and affectionate note, in his own hand, in pencil. So thankful for papers, especially *Public Opinion*. Will I come out to him in November or December? He says that he is quite happy, though doomed. Asks me for a book, with my writing, giving it to him. Says only half of my character has yet been shown in my books, only the 'Horatian' side, and hopes I shall show the other. (Is there another?) Begs me to go to his studio and select a memento of him."

" June 17th.

"I went to the G. after dinner, and had a long talk with Walter Prideaux, official of the Goldsmiths' Co., about my taking up my father's servitude. This I spoke of to him years back, but though I got a letter from my uncle and part of the evidence required, the matter dropped. I may as well take up the freedom, though I do not know that it can do me any good. I shall be a citizen of no mean city."

" June 18th.

"I have done the great debate†—the finest I

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\* The sculptor who was dying in the south of France.

† On Gladstone's Bill for Disendowing and Disestablishing the Protestant Church in Ireland. Of Bishop Magee's speech on this occasion Lord Derby declared, "Its fervid eloquence and impassioned and brilliant language have never in my memory been surpassed, and rarely equalled."

## GRENVILLE MURRAY HORSE-WHIPPED

recollect—in a serious sort of way for *Punch*, for, after all deductions for humbug reformers and hollow defenders, the subject is too big to cut jokes on. Magee's speech has made a sensation—if Bright had spoken half as well, the Liberal papers would have gone mad and sung *nunc dimittis*."

" June 23rd.

" To Whitefriars to dine. Stuck up for a recognition of Lord Russell in this Irish matter—the brave little old man has worked at it all his life, and now sees it carried by men who were in the Brocas, or at the Union, when he was preaching about it. Told T. T. to write a poem in this sense, and I hope he will—I have written that way in the *Illustrated*, and shall send it anonymously to the Earl."

" June 24th.

" Grenville Murray, for slander in the *Queen's Messenger*, has had an awful good licking from Lord Carington, and serve him right. We hoped that *Punch's* example had ended that sort of work, but it has revived of late in much beastly vigour, and the beast's remedy is the only one."

Lord Carington horse-whipped Murray in consequence of an offensive article in a scurrilous publication called the *Queen's Messenger*, of which Murray's son was the registered proprietor, but Murray himself the chief writer. The article was thought to refer to Lord Carington's father. The case for assault came before the Marlborough St. Police Magistrates, Mr. d'Eyncourt and Mr. Knox. At its close there was a pitched battle between the friends of the rival parties for the possession of a box of papers referring to the *Queen's*

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

*Messenger. Punch* (I think at Shirley's hands) was equal to the occasion :—

### "CHAOS WITHOUT KNOX.

"The Marlborough Street battle let others relate,  
We'll deal with but one or two facts,  
Mr. d'Eyncourt presides, but the suitors, they state  
*Disdain Court* by violent acts.  
But what, most of all, we can venture to say,  
Our sense of congruity shocks,  
The parties to this most inglorious fray  
Came to blows in the absence of Knox."

"June 27th.

"It 'is better to go to the house of mourning than the house of feasting'—which is true, if there is another world, as I know there is—else not, I think. We did go to the former from the latter—we called on poor Annie Munro, 152 Buck. P. Road. Melancholy enough—all in perfect order, as after a funeral. Many things gone, the rest ticketed with prices. She held up, and spoke of all being for the best, but could hardly keep her tears down—nor could E., without effort. The poor fellow had sent me over, by Annie, a little thing that had held his matches—a frog—he wished something that had been near him to be near me. And two tiny terra cotta vases for Emily. And desired us to say whether we should like a couple of casts of a small Dante and Shakespeare. I did not want anything more than the relics that we had received, but she pressed the others, and I could not refuse. She repeated expressions of the pleasure he gets from my papers—newspapers, I mean. Both Mary and she write every day. Came away very sad, with recollections that I had seen merry doings there."\*

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\* Alec. Munro died in 1871.

## THE IRISH CHURCH AS VENUS

" June 29th.

" To *Punch*. Dinner to-day at my instance, a concession I repaid by suggesting the cut—'Venus attired by the Graces.'\* Gave M. L. the book in which for several months of last year I recorded the sayings at the *Punch* dinners—several looked at it, and were hugely delighted. T. Taylor in good talk to-day. Told a good story about S.—W. —, who advised him on circuit not to be led away by successes gained through literary fame. 'On my first coming, every attorney of note gave me a brief—no one gave me a second.' S. quite unconscious of what it meant. And about his being asked to the 'Albany' to meet his first Lord—the peer didn't come, so one Elliott played lord, and W.'s subservience awful—even to affecting to be drunk when the other affected it. . . .

" To-day a huge fête at the Crystal Palace, for the Viceroy, *i.e.*, the Queen won't entertain her guest, so lends him to a showman, to make the best of him, and throws in her son and daughter-in-law to help out the bill of fare."

" June 30th.

" . . . E. and I dined at home, and amused ourselves in the evening by constructing pedigree on her side. She said something very grateful and affectionate, which, being written in my heart, I set not down here."

" July 7th.

" Up at 8—proofs—to White Horse Cellar, whence all the *Punch* party, except T. T. and C. K., and Sketchley who came down by rail. Started at 10 on the outside of the 4-horse coach, the 'Exquisite,' for

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\* Venus (the Irish Church) attired by the (Christian) Graces, Lord Westbury, Lord Grey and Lord Cairns, the chief peers to move amendments to Mr. Gladstone's Bill.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

Tunbridge Wells. Lovely day, not too much sun, and the coach went splendidly, but I saw the driver was one of the old sort, and liked to knock against or chaff those who did not get out of his way. We enjoyed the drive hugely, and were within 4 miles of T. Wells, M. L. on box, and behind him Tenniel, S. B., Kiki, Silver, when a leader gave a plunge and fell down. The wheeler was over him before the driver could check the coach, and then he called out, terrified, 'Passengers all down.' Down we went, and I received Fred on the top of my head, but no harm done.\* The horse was as dead as Julius Cæsar. Had he lived to kick, there might have been mischief, and had the thing happened as we went down one of those hills, some of us must have been killed. Thank God. With three horses we went ignominiously into the Wells. Sussex Hotel, opposite the Pantiles—wash and lunch. Wrote Emily, lest she might hear in the *Echo* or some way. (She did not, but had a presentiment and was quite prepared, she said, for my letter.) Lounged about the Pantiles—bought E. scissors mounted in leather—and we dined, excellently, at 5. Four went away by train—the others, including myself, stayed—slept on ground floor, No. 3, and very soundly. A very pleasant 'out,' into lovely country."

" July 27th.

"Lillie Jerrold d. with us, and we went to the St. James's box, to see Schneider in the famous 'Grande Duchesse.' She is very pretty, allowing for the make up, and her acting is finished, her face full of expression. The business is as immoral and suggestive as possible, but only to those who understand. I suppose a modest girl would see only a great rude

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\* 'It is an idiotic thing to write, but let it be said that I wore this crushed hat till 4th March, 1871! Mr. Pepys is no dandy.'

## MRS. BEECHER STOWE AND BYRON

flirt. But to the evil the woman presents nothing more modest than an erotic she-cat on a grass-plot, with all the little noises, petulances, and the rest of the business-anatory. The rest is mere buffoonery, but not unamusing."

" *August 8th.*

" Had the *Punch* proofs, but there is nothing to alter.\* Last week dear old M. L. took out a very harmless paragraph I left in, about midwifery on board ship—but he is right, perhaps, to be over-fastidious."

" *August 31st.*

" Here beginneth a story without an end—Mrs. Beecher Stowe publishes in *Macmillan*, which Grove† now edits, an article called the ' Truth about Lord and Lady Byron ' (or to that effect), and alleging that Lady B. told Mrs. S. that Lord B. had committed incest with Mrs. Leigh. I have heard this said before. Now I don't believe a d—d word of the charge, but I do believe Byron, who was a cad, made people think him worse than he was. This article let loose such a storm—wishy-washy waves, however, as will not cease this side Xmas. I wrote, to help Grove, a paragraph in ' N. in P.,' but very guarded."

About the middle of August Shirley joined his wife and the two boys in Wales. Just before starting he met the proprietor of one of the leading London newspapers and asked him whether he had ever been at Beaumaris :—

" No," said the great man, " I have never been in Scotland at all ! "

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\* Mark Lemon was ill and Shirley was again " acting editor."

† [Sir] George Grove.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

Hearing that Mrs. Frank Romer was at Barmouth, he wrote :—

S. B. TO MRS. F. ROMER (MRS. JOPLING ROWE).

*“ Sunday morning,*

*“ Church time.*

“ MY DEAR MRS. FRANK,

“ Do you think that nobody can come to Wales but yourself? Ha! I am within 40 miles of you as the crow flies, but then I cannot well travel so, not having arrived at crowdom yet. We *shall* be crows—see ‘Vestiges of Creation,’ as explained by Tancred. Here we be, with a panorama of the Carnarvonshire hills—they call them mountains in Welsh—before us, across the Menai Straits. I wanted to be very dull, and I believe I shall attain my wish. One can stagnate here very successfully. I was rejoiced to hear that you had gone on a long visit to Belle Vue, and I hope the fresh airs have brought colour to your cheeks, after the fag of hard work. The more we all look at the portrait of Helen,\* the more we admire it. It is now hung on the wall opposite the window in the ‘Shakespeare,’ † and in the corner to the left—there is no good place in the room, but that I thought the least bad.

“ I came down yesterday, so I have lost no time in shouting across to you. London was growing intolerable, but I stayed for Sissie Frith’s \* wedding; we had full choral service and were all photographed. You will conceive me having to propose ‘The Bridesmaids.’ I brought in allusion to the group of such in the father’s

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\* Mrs. Warner’s youngest daughter, painted by Mrs. F. Romer.

† The Warners’ private room at the “Bedford” was so called from the supposed fact that Shakespeare and the wits of his time made the Bedford Coffee House their afternoon lounge.

‡ Mrs. Panton.

## RELIGIOUS "LARKING"

picture of the Railway Station! which, as Mr. Pepys saith, 'caused a pretty diversion.' I wish the Welsh people did not speak Welsh, one is far less at home than in France. But then you don't want to be at home, don't you see, says you, which is true, only when the maiden-in-waiting says 'I put gas,' and you say 'Very well,' meaning that *she* will put it out, and you find it burning in the morning, and that 'I' meant 'you,' it makes one regret the confusion of tongues.

"Ever yours faithfully,  
"SHIRLEY BROOKS."

S. B. TO DITTO.

"15 MENAI VIEW TERRACE,  
"BANGOR,  
"20th August, 1869.

"MY DEAR MRS. FRANK,

"You would have got my illustrated note from Beaumaris. I have come here, as convenient for excursions, but I do not like the locality as well as the other, the magnificent mountains being exchanged for pretty woods and white villas, which one can see anywhere. Yesterday we went to Carnarvon—the Castle is glorious, but the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists were holding their 'Socialion,' and the place was crammed with he and she clowns in their best clothes, all 'larking' but in a religious spirit. Thank heaven, my driver belongs to some other sect, the Congregationalists, I believe, so he hates the others and did his best to run over them. I think we scrunched the toes of one Calvinist, for we dashed out of the town amid a volley of abuse. Being in Welsh, it did not hurt.

"Say to Mr. Ellis Williams, please, with my kindest regards, that I should have been very much pleased to come, but I travel with three incumbrances, and our



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

locomotion is 'a business.' *You* will do very well, I know. I hope you gave them a French song. Such are always applauded doubly: once for their merit, and once to show that we are grateful, and understand. Loudest of all is the applause when we *don't* understand. I shall ask for the encore *yn Llundain*.

"*Of course*, you have done nothing, on the spot. It is thus that the seed is sown, the germination is an after matter. I am stagnating like a toad at the bottom of a well, but I know I am not wasting my time. I am sorry that your holiday is drawing to a close, but it is a good thing to have led six weeks of do-nothingness. Mrs. S——y sends you her kindest regards—so do I—mine.

"Ever yours affectionately,

"SHIRLEY BROOKS.

"Mrs. F. Romer."

Quotation from letter to Mrs. Romer during the Wales visit.

"Apropos of nothing, in one of the old plays, a young fellow puts the doctrine of filial obedience in a clear light. His father has ordered him not to flirt with a certain artful Mrs. Frail. 'I shall. The young woman's mighty civil. Tho' he be my feyther, I *bean't bound* 'prentice to 'un; I shan't obey him.' Your Uncle Mark coarsely abuses me for writing *letters*, when the same amount of ink and paper would make articles for *Punch*. There is some show of reason in this, but I *bean't bound* 'prentice to *him*, and then I never could do the thing that I ought. Besides, I ought to have a holiday, whether I want it or not. Besides, I do. Any news about 'Pop' and her marriage? Wasn't it to be about now? I miss the 'Bedford' Mart of General Information About

## IN WALES

Everybody. Remember me kindly there *if you like*. Excuse this wild envelope; lucky that I have *any*, the shops are shut to-day. Best regards to your husband.

“ Yours very faithfully,  
“ S. B.”

S. B. TO PERCIVAL LEIGH.

“ 9 VICTORIA TERRACE,  
“ BEAUMARIS,  
“ N. WALES,  
“ Aug. 31st.

“ MY DEAR PROFESSOR,

“ Your letter of the 29th could hardly have got to me faster had you known my address. I sent for my letters yesterday, and yours was in the packet. I should have written to you long ago, but was uncertain of your whereabouts, and have asked M. L. thereabout, but he forgot to say. I am actually writing from Bangor, but we move back to Beaumaris to-morrow, and the above is an address at which all favours will be thankfully received.

“ We have done very well, this ‘out.’ My folks first settled at Beaumaris, until I came, and the boys boated, swam, etc. Then, on my arrival, a fortnight or so back, we migrated here for the convenience of excursions, as everything can be reached from Bangor, whereas Beaumaris has no rail convenient. Hence, we have done a good deal, Carnarvon Castle, Penmanmaur (‘a very pig mountain, glory of all Wales’; remember the Welshman in the *Spectator*, who didn’t like to go to the Lover’s Leap, as he was liable to catch cold, but wished to know whether he might break his neck from Penmanmaur), Llanberis, etc. But our crowning feat was *Snowdon*, up to the *top* of which we went, yesterday week. It is nothing to do, that is

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

from the Llanberis side, and on horses (till near the top), as we did it, but *much* over another route, with a narrow walk of a mile, and precipices 1,000 feet on each hand, path 8 feet ; men have had to be conducted blindfold over it. I don't do *these* things. The view from the top, with the abysses sending up their mists of sacrifice to the sun, who shone nobly at the right moment, the gloriousest sight I ever saw. The work took just five hours, and to the hotel, and I am glad I did it. We have been very well, eating and drinking (beer chiefly ; it is good here), and I have set up a pipe, which I think answers, until last night, when the boys took it into their heads to be awfully sick, and we had had mushrooms for dinner, so of course my wife began to think of all toadstools. But I believed it was only the wild and irregular living : tarts, beer, swimming, hot sun, more beer, honey, and other delicacies, and to-day all is right. To-morrow, as I say, we go back to B. M. and to the splendid panorama of the Carnarvonshire mountains.

“ I have done nothing for *Punch* since I left. I wanted a *holiday*. I have just written elsewhere what was necessary, and that old friend, M. L. writes to ask for ‘ over set ’ of *that*. I believe an Editor has no more bowels than the dragon Daniel stuck the fireballs into : *vide* Apocrypha. He won't get much, I can tell him, he ought to make the other horses work. One scarcely cares to look at a paper, except just the telegrams. I have not seen the *Times* for a fortnight, but a Liverpool paper comes early, and tells me all I want to know.

“ My love to your nieces. Were I they, Southampton should never agree with me, while I had an affable uncle in London, whom it is a charity to stir up. Kind regards also to your brother and sister. You would like this place, or Beaumaris, quite quiet, do as you like, no swells, no rabble, good beer, and fine scenery

## “ NONE OF YOUR SHEENIES ”

without the trouble of doing more than looking up at it. Bangor is a clean, well-drained little capital, with a beastly ugly cathedral, not in the least suggestive of religion of any kind.”

“ *Sept. 12th.*

“ Batches of letters, including the invitation from the Viceroy to go to the opening of the Suez Canal. Would I could, but the time and the sacrifice would make it absurd to think of it. Young Ravens must be fed, as M. L. always saith.”

“ *Sept. 13th.*

“ To-day performed the solemn ceremony of investing Reginald with my watch. He wanted one, and this has served me well for many years, and goes excellently—it will do for his early experiences. Only I shall have to buy another. He was so delighted, and not ashamed to show that he was.”

“ *Sept. 17th.*

“ Wrote a long thing for *Punch* about the Wallace \* monument, just opened, with a wild muddle of history. I laughed myself, don't know if others will.”

“ *Sept. 21st.*

“ Took a pill, and dreamed of the loveliest face I ever saw—perfectly oval and regular, and her hair in a glossy mass, hiding face till I put it aside.”

“ *Sept. 30th.*

“ Read to-day that good, old, odd Mrs. Bensusan was dead. A kind Jewess, and very clever. She was very fond of E., gave her a trinket one day because they might never meet again, but she was here after that. She embroidered me a waistcoat. Proud Jews, of a Spanish race—none of your Sheenies.”

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\* The article entitled “ Wallace Wight ” is a delightful *mélange* of history ancient and modern.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

S. B. TO MRS. F. ROMER (MRS. JOPLING ROWE).

"Sept. 20th, 1869.

"Now, my dear Mrs. Frank, didn't we swear an Eternal Friendship? Then, such being the case, why do you say—without thinking it for a moment—that such ideas are possible as those you hint at? The fact is I have only just brought myself into a condition of comparative civilisation after a long month among the Welsh hills, and I had intended, and do intend, to walk over and see your studio and its contents, and so complete the civilising process. I won't make an appointment, because I know you are always at work, and I shall be sure to find you. I hear that your Welsh trip has done you all sorts of good, and that you are greatly refreshed thereby—the word 'stouter' was used, but I could not put my pen to *that*. Certainly Wales is a place to see, but not to live in. After I had done the sight business, I went back to Beaumaris, and was utterly idle, except that I did all my newspaper work, with a large addition as usual. At most hours I sat by the sea, 'mooning' at the mountains opposite. But one good day I had, and I *do* wish you could have seen the object of the excursion, the Falls of the Swallow, near Capel Curig. They are things, or a thing, to look at and remember. For the rest, I take it that you have seen as good scenery as I have, or better, for I read that near Barmouth there are 'unsurpassed' districts. But then I don't know whether you care about scenery, and I have no doubt all your companions prefer a well-looking young man, or a novel, or a song to all the mountain effects in the world—and quite right too. I came on a young lady in the noble pass of Llanberis—her friends had walked on to see views, and she had got into a shady corner, and had her head down in a book, which I manoeuvred

## A GOOD KEENE CUT

to see; it was the 'Morals of May Fair'—a novel. However, we'll talk about this. I have not at all settled into London, and I would have gone away again, but all next week your uncle Falstaff wants me to edit for him—after that, the weather will break up, and then London is the best place in the world. Are you being taken to the theatres—not that there is anything worth seeing, I believe? I am actually going to Forest Hill, presently, to dine with a friend, that we may go like dear good children, and see the fireworks at the Crystal Palace—if it don't rain. Not to *take* children, mark you, dear Madam. There is no excuse at all, except utter frivolity, and the man who is going to drive me over is twice as big as I am.

"I have an invitation from Nubar Pasha, writing for the Viceroy of Egypt, to go to the opening of the Suez Canal: he writes in French, and is polite enough to call me an '*esprit éclairé*.' Such a stupid note as this is a proof that Nubar don't know me.

"Always yours faithfully,

"S. B."

S. B. TO DITTO.

"Sept. 27th, 1869.

"There is a cut this week, about an artist, that will I think, make you laugh.\* I will send it. We are having our *Punch* dinner again at the 'Bedford' tomorrow (Tuesday); perhaps you may look in. I had the opportunity of showing your picture† to my wife, who is enchanted with it, and wishes she had one by

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\* A beautiful drawing by Charles Keene of a father and son looking over the shoulder of an artist at his easel on the sea-shore:

"*Papa*. 'There, Henry! If you could do like that, I'd have you *taught drawing*, my boy!'"

† That of Miss Helen Warner.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

the same hand, of the boys. Some day, perhaps, you may like to indulge this vanity. I *have* a reasonable memory, but what do you think of this in proof? I am going to be made a 'Goldsmith,' and I want the certificate of my late parents' marriage. So I marched off to-day to get it at St. Andrew's, Holborn. Having searched and searched in vain, and having begun to wonder whether I was going to be the hero of a sensation novel, and turn out a nobleman's 'chylid,' I suddenly astounded the clerk by banging the book together—'I beg your pardon, I meant St. Mary, Islington.' He stared so that I let him keep 2d. change out of 2s. 6d. for himself, and then I went into St. Paul's, as a secluded place, to have a good laugh at myself.

"Always yours faithfully,

"S. B.

"Mrs. F. Romer."

"Oct. 6th.

"To-day did what I might as well have done years ago, namely, *took up my Freedom at the Goldsmiths' Hall—also at Guildhall.* Cost me in all £2 8s. Wrote Reginald that I had done this."

"Oct. 13th.

"The *Morning Star* died to-day. I have read it generally from the beginning. Wrote its epitaph in 'N. in P.' to-day—as fairly as I could."

"Oct. 19th.

"Long and kind letter from Mrs. Andrew Ramsay, who is delighted with what I have done for the Welsh. N.B.—I learn from Mr. E. Freeman's capital little book, just out, called 'Old English History for Children,' and which tells much that few grown-up

## PRAISE FROM LORD LYTTON

children know, that 'Welsh' only means folks who talk a language that could not be understood by the incomers from Angeln."

" Oct. 20th.

" A Scotch thing called the *Thistle*, frantic rage at my 'Wallace Wight' in *Punch*, but only boyish abuse."

" Oct. 23rd.

" Lord Derby died this morning, and Mark Lemon asked me to do something for *Punch*. Rather a perfunctory business, though I greatly admired the man. So built a sonnet, not worse nor better than might be expected in a thing asked for and done in the hour.\* Waited for proof, and then to Bedford.

### " LORD DERBY.

" Withdrawing slow from those he loved so well,  
Autumn's pale morning saw him pass away :  
Leave them beside their sacred dead to pray,  
Unmarked of strangers. Calmer memories tell  
How nobly Stanley lived. No braver name  
Glow in the golden roll of all his sires,  
Or all their peers. His was the heart that fires  
The eloquent tongue, and his the eye whose aim  
Alone half quelled his foe. He struck for Power  
(And power in England is a hero's prize),  
Yet he could throw it from him. Those whose eyes  
See not for tears, remember in this hour  
That he was oft from Homer's page beguiled  
To frame some 'wonder for a happy child.' "

" Oct. 25th.

" Our elegant parlour-maid, Hawes, uses my desk

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\* Elsewhere he writes : " It was done at Whitefriars on a Sunday afternoon, and I swear somebody came in between every line." Perfunctory or not, it drew from Lord Lytton a letter saying that it was " full of feeling, truth and rhythmical music," as well as an invitation to dinner, of which we find record a week later.



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

for her correspondence, and is very welcome, but she uses my pad, and leaves her traces—found lines with a mystery—of iniquity, I suppose—cut them out and left them for her as a hint—they were taken. Whether it were or not—this nonsense reminded me of an idea which I may work out.”

“ Oct. 30th.

“ At  $\frac{1}{4}$  to 8 to dine with Lord Lytton,\* 12 Grosvenor Square. He is very well preserved, b. 1805, nevertheless looks as one who has lived. The old high-courtesy manner, but he laughs out. Nothing could be pleasanter. The dinner, I may suppose, was only that he might see what I am like—or it were more gracious to write that I might observe him at my ease, for there were only the clergyman, Rev. W. Cox, of Bishopsgate, whom I have known for years (he is a violent mason), a nephew of Lord L.’s, and a young man, possibly a secretary, who never spoke. Quiet d., not at all remarkable. Plenty of talk—he talked well, but as one who had said the same things before. But there were two or three points. Said Derby was a great nobleman, but not a great gentleman—cynical—and instanced his saying loud to Mrs. Gladstone when coming out of the Chapel Royal, ‘ You didn’t succeed in that Ionian business.’ ‘ So unkind,’ she said to Lord L., ‘ when we had done our very best.’ The man, D(erby), was the one who of everybody L. L. had known best deserved to be called ‘ clever.’ Good critic, and his scholarship elegant, but of the Eton-boy type. L. L., in speaking of the Byron scandal, said he knew Mrs. Leigh, and believed in her innocence. Thought that nobody of the new generation read the writings of the old. Thought I did not look more than

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\* His first and last meeting with Lord Lytton, who died three years later.

## THE "SUCCOUR DODGE"

40—but I do. Spoke well about Shakespeare's want of art, without which *he* could do, having ruined imitators, who could not. Some fun about no end of big men who had come from Norfolk—I mean celebrities—L. asked my county—I said London. Says his work dwells in his mind a long time before he writes, but that he writes very fast—and smokes a great deal—pipes. We had a cigar after d. There—I left room to note anything of a meeting I am glad to have had, but though I saw a good deal of him, there is not much to set down. It is interesting to have met the man whose writings I have been reading for 30 years, and who had something to do with giving me ideas as to form in fiction. Left with Cox, as soon as my faithful Target \* was announced, and L. L. was quite cordial and so on. E. much pleased that I had been."

" Oct. 31st.

" Reading Petherick's Nile† book, just out—a very uncomfortable story—he gets through hideous bother to reach Speke and Grant, and they all but cut him, and Speke refuses to recognize the 'succour dodge.' Grant, in his book, says that P. went about his ivory trade instead of pushing on, which P. furiously denies."

\* \* \* \*

" Reading Catullus—and Disraeli's 'Tancred'—what good things, *mots*, there are in this."

S. B. TO MRS. FRANK ROMER (MRS. JOPLING ROWE).

" Sunday, Oct. 17th, 1869.

" I want some inspiration awfully. I have undertaken to write something for the *Illustrated* for Xmas—in fact, two somethings. One will be easy, as I and the

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\* The cab-driver, whom he employed for years.

† John and Mrs. Petherick's "Travels in Central Africa."

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

artist devised the picture together. But the other relates to the *coloured* picture, which will be pretty (keep the subject to yourself for *business* reasons), and represents a young lady tying up her garter. She is about four, I take it. I must take council, or rather counsel, how to treat this important work. Having never worn the article, I am at a loss for the emotions connected therewith, but there was a Miss Sarah Carter that may help me. Brighton has been very pleasant, but crammed, and fearfully dear. Only yesterday came the most violent rain-storm I ever saw. Just as it was over in came Helen (your subject) and Miss Chastelaine that was, and her husband, and took the rooms that we were vacating, 75 King's Road. I came up, dined with Uncle Mark, went home and dressed, and then to the St. James's to see 'She Stoops to Conquer,' worse acted than I ever saw it done. Theatre odious and odorous with new paint. A really pretty drop scene which I should like you to see, and the piece exceedingly well mounted—if you would like to be taken some night I will obtain places for you. The *Tony Lumpkin* very good indeed. The new Americans worse than bad. No, madam, I have not become a goldsmith that I might eat City feasts, though they are good things, but that I may—on second thoughts, I shall keep that in the deep recesses of my heart, until I see whether it comes to anything. They made me a 'citizen' in a room hung with fine old copies of Hogarth's 'Apprentices,' kept there to warn and encourage the young, and they gave me a book of 'Rules for Conduct in Life,' which are excellent, and would perfectly unfit me for any Life I am likely to be able to lead. So I have given them to a rich but honest friend.

"We have come up—the carpets are down—and we have settled for the winter. I hope you will find

## THE QUEEN THREATENED

your way over, though it is not for one artist to suggest to another to strike work—but I do hope it nevertheless.

“ Always yours faithfully,  
“ SHIRLEY BROOKS.

“ Mrs. F. Romer, Jun.”

“ Nov. 3rd.

“ B. & E. have been moving for an injunction to stop a rubbishy thing called *Punch and Judy*, but V.-C. Malins would not give in. He, however, complimented *Punch* hugely. I am sorry they moved in the matter.”

“ Nov. 5th.

“ Blackfriars new bridge is to be opened to-morrow. Wrote for *Punch* a scene, with Dr. Johnson in it—he fought Gwyn’s plan for the first bridge—against Mylne’s. N.B.—I went with M. L. to see the first stone of this one, Joseph Cubitt’s, laid. Vile wet day—the Q. has come to Windsor, but if to-morrow’s like this, I doubt her going. A brutal placard has been put out, and copied by the *Globe* :

“ ‘ TO ALL FENIANS.

“ ‘ *Vive la République !*

“ ‘ The Queen will visit the City in state on Saturday, and on that day she will be shot. She seldom gives a chance. The opportunity won’t be lost !

“ ‘ GOD SAVE IRELAND ! ’

I hope the beast who wrote it will be bitten by a mad dog.”

“ Nov. 8th.

“ At 6 d. with Sherard Osborne,\* at the opening meeting of the Geographers. Sat between him and old

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\* At this time managing director of the Telegraph Construction Co.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

Sir Thomas Freemantle, b. 1798, an ancient Conservative official. He was very pleasant. Hates Disraeli for his conduct to Peel. All because he was refused the office he wanted, 'and,' said Sir T. naïvely, 'he was not then by any means popular, or a power, and it was not to be expected Peel would disappoint the son of a big man, or of a staunch supporter, for D.'s sake.' There spoke Old England's *genius*. D[israeli] very cold to the young men of his party—never asks them to dinner. On S. O.'s left was the Duke of Wellington, a comic copy of his father. Rather deaf. Has odd amatory tastes. I determined, as matter of curiosity, to speak to him, and I sat by him at the meeting, and told him some things he could not hear from the speakers. Had a handshake from the son of the great duke—rather a diluted glory. Introduced to Sir Bartle Frere, whose speech and manner give no idea of his high talent. Meeting (Mrs. Burton there, and angry that enough was not said about Richard), very hot, and Livingstone letter, 1868, rather dull except that it had a 'querulous' reference to liberties that had been taken with his Geography, but it was not clear what he meant, and the discussion was awkward. Osborne was sure L. would meet Baker. Sir Roderick\* (very Pecksniffian, I think; perhaps wrong. I know not. It may have been old world habit,) was sure he would not. Home early."

"Nov. 10th.

"*Punch* d. Much fun with dear old Ponny as usual. He said that having been consulted by M. L. at the time of my engagement, he had opposed it, because I was only a magazine writer, and had not the art of making the pointed paragraphs required in *Punch*, but he gravely allowed that he had been wrong. I said

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\* Murchison.



MARK LEMON AND SHIRLEY BROOKS

*Portion of a cut which appeared in "Punch's"  
rival, "Fun," (Nov. 1863). Shirley pasted  
this in his diary and wrote "Highly  
civil writing about us"*

STANFORD LIBRARY

## HANDSOME ISABEL BURTON

that when verses on my death had to appear in *Punch* Tom T. should not do them, and I desired that Kiki should. Very likely he will."

\* \* \* \*

"When we had settled our cut, against Ayrton, who has been making himself an ass by explaining that his duty as Chief Commissioner of Works was only to check expenditure,\* we took the Suez subject which I had urged on M. L., and T. T. suggested a very good thing—view from top of Pyramid."

"Nov. 13th.

"A letter from Mrs. Burton in the *Times*. Wrote, chiefly to please that handsome Isabel, a *Punch* paragraph thereon.†"

\* \* \* \*

"Saw T. Taylor's and Dubourg's play, 'New Men and Old Acres.' Too much talk and too little action, and 'situations' mixed, but a very pleasant, evenly-written piece, with an agreeable story, and Madge Robertson (Mrs. Kendal) charming—the Robertson manner, and talk, hath been transferred to the Haymarket. Tom, *et ux*, in next box, but we did not know it (E. thought it was so, however), and we congratulated them, coming away. Glad I went."

"Nov. 14th.

"Set my books in order, and read and burned a good many of my letters to my father. Without vaunt I

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\* Following [Sir] Henry Layard in that office, Ayrton's appointment was anything but popular. The cartoon was entitled "Our New (B)AEDILE," and he was made to say, "I don't know nothink about hart, and painters, an' sculpchers, an' harchitex, an' market gardeners, an' such like. My dooty's to take care of *the money*." He was as much out of sympathy with expending public funds on elevating the public taste as his predecessor had been the reverse.

† *Vide* "A Card from the Isle of Africa," *Punch*, Nov. 20th,



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

may set down that I was a very faithful correspondent, and that I find no evidence of having ever been betrayed, under the repeated provocations, into any departure from the gentleness due to him."

" *Nov. 15th.*

" Letter from another unexpected quarter. Emma E——, of the Lovely Eyes, sends me a MS. But it won't do, poor child."

" *Nov. 17th.*

" Wrote Emma E—— a kind and sincere letter, which ought not to annoy her. Those eyes are too pretty to be dimmed."

From which we see that, like Thackeray, he, when acting editor, suffered from " thorns in the cushion."

" *Nov. 20th.*

" Sent poor old R—— £1. He says he never cared much for life, and now is quite ready to die, but doesn't wish to be starved. This is reasonable, and though I ought not to give away money, I think I may be pardoned this time."

" *Nov. 22nd.*

" Beastly day, but we went at night to see a new thing, by Gilbert, at German Reed's. It's called ' Ages Ago.' Pictures come out and talk. The best thing of the opera sort he has had, and Clay's music good. Some smart hits at the R. Academy. Author called."

" *Nov. 23rd.*

" Bought a translation of Livy, and a very good 2. v. Churchill, the other day, for 4s. They came to-day and I instantly found a quotation for use. Books easily pay their cost. . . .

" We d. first time at Tom Wood's, 2 Gordon Square. Such a pretty dining-room, mediæval. That very nice

“CAN NOTHING BE DONE?”

Newcastle-on-Tyne girl, whom I met at Coleman's with them, Miss L. H. We are great allies, considering we have met twice only, but she is one of those girls whom one likes at once. After d. she and I did nonsense, meeting in the middle of the room, and trying to say 'The Pope is dead,' 'I am very sorry,' without laughing, but we couldn't. She asked for my photograph, which I sent her next day. If she writes as pleasantly as she talks and smiles I should like to hear from her."

"Nov. 25th.

"Fenian scoundrels in Tipperary have elected O'Donovan Rossa, a convict in gaol. O, dear Oliver Cromwell."

"Nov. 27th.

"Mrs. H. told E. of an old lady who considers child-having the great duty and happiness of life, and who, hearing that Mrs. Wolfen had been married four years, and had had no child, said, with great anxiety, 'Dear me, can nothing be done?'"

"Dec. 3rd.

"Wrote as usual. At end of work tried to do some verse about Grisi, but the thing would not shape itself—jotted some ideas, if they can be called so—they were but expressions—and next morning they fell into place very easily, the truth being, I suppose, that to-day I had been at prose all day, and also that I was tired."

“GIULIA GRISI.\*

“Nay, no elegies nor dirges!  
Let thy name recall the surges,  
Waves of song, whose magic play  
Swept our very souls away:  
And the memories of the days  
When to name thee was to praise;

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\* Shirley had been introduced to her at Whitby in 1864.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

and asked me to send her the Almanac. 'To all she smiles extends'—quite awake, I take it. Such a funny dinner—long waits."

Shortly before this date Mrs. Frank Romer had written telling him that her little boy was down with scarlet fever. Notwithstanding that he was lamed in his writing hand with gout, he wrote her the following long letter of sympathy :—

S. B. TO MRS. F. ROMER (MRS. JOPLING ROWE).

" 17th December, 1869.

" MY DEAR MRS. FRANK,

" Your note has made us very sad. We can only assure you both, and it is needless, of our heartiest sympathy. It makes me ashamed of feeling petulant over a mere gout fit. My wife says, with her best love, that you are to take the greatest care of *yourself*, to *live well*, and keep up your stamina, and to get a whiff of fresh air whenever you can, *if it is only five minutes at a time*. We have had so much illness of the severest kind with our boys, both of whom have more than once been in extreme peril, that we can enter into all your feelings. But the great thing is to keep up your own spirits, and believe that all is going well—and it *will*. Poor little Geoffrey—he looked the last sort of child that ought to be afflicted. I hope you will soon be able to give a good account of him, and that his brother will escape the fever. It is most hard to be shut up in quarantine : the du Mauriers were for the same cause, for six weeks in the spring, and I know another family tabooed in the same manner. But that is a small thing compared to the anxiety for one's child. Again I say, believe that we deeply sympathise with you. It is

## IN RED INK

s, of course, what naturally occurred to me, as the  
e thing for you to do, and you will return to town  
a new place, I trust. But I will allude no more  
the past. Time is the only true physician.

"We have had but a dull Xmas—we had some  
ends on the Eve, and had things been otherwise, you  
d Frank would (had you pleased) have been among  
em. I, of course, had to give up everything—even  
linner at Sir Henry Thompson's to meet Browning—  
wever he was ill too, and did not go. I have been  
le to do nothing but read, and dictate a little. In  
t, I have been more uncomfortable than for a very  
g time. I will write again when I can do so with  
re ease—if you leave town first give me your  
dress. . . ."

The following entry in the Diary is in red ink, and is  
at referred to at the beginning of this chapter :—

*Dec. 22nd.*

"The doctor, Mr. Barker, came, and I casually  
entioned that I felt in walking, a shortness of breath.  
e very carefully and repeatedly auscultated me.  
e said I had an obstruction in a valve of my heart—  
glutinous deposit. He desired me not to walk fast,  
to run upstairs. I said I was surprised, for I had  
en most carefully examined when effecting my last  
urance. He said that had the affair then existed,  
could not have been overlooked, so it must have set  
since. There was *no* fatty degeneration. He said  
at there was no need to believe in danger, men lived  
old age with such things, but I must be careful, and  
would examine me again in a month."

The entry is continued in black ink :—

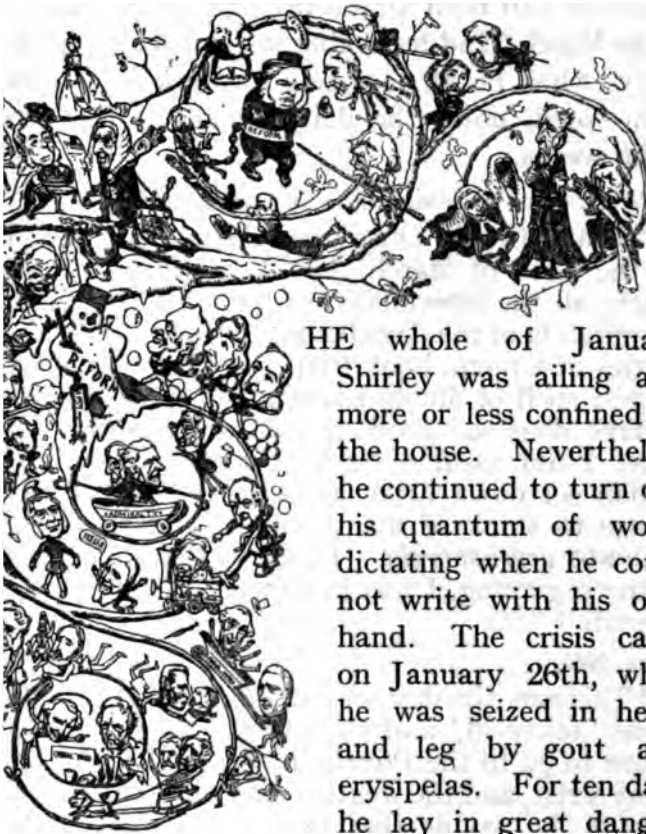
"So! Well, I have no clinging to life, but I could  
sh, D.V., to live to place the boys where they should  
earning their own living, and they will have had a

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

good education. Emily is very careful, and could manage on the assurance money, but it would be a difficult life for her, poor child, and a change, unless she married again. I shall say nothing about it yet, but be careful, as advised, and earn every sovereign I can. The rest is with Him, Who has let me do a good deal for her and others, and may be pleased to let me go on doing it."

## CHAPTER XVII

Last Days of Mark Lemon—His Death—Editorship of *Punch* red to S. B. and Accepted—Death of Charles Dickens—.'s Inauguration—Gone *ad majores*, 1870.



HE whole of January Shirley was ailing and more or less confined to the house. Nevertheless he continued to turn out his quantum of work, dictating when he could not write with his own hand. The crisis came on January 26th, when he was seized in heart and leg by gout and erysipelas. For ten days he lay in great danger.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

Then came several weeks of gradual convalescence. But, though there were four full years of work before him, it is doubtful whether he ever recovered his former vigour. On the top of his illness came the shock of his chief's death and the assumption of new responsibilities—responsibilities in which he would have revelled in his vigorous youth, but which were now to prove too great a tax upon the strength of which he had been all too prodigal in the past.

On March 22nd he is able to get back to his beloved diary, when he at once sets to work to "write up" from rough notes the daily events of the preceding eight weeks.

*Under date Jan. 19th but written on March 22nd.*

"Thank God! Once more resume entries. I write on the 22nd of March, Tuesday, having been in bed nearly all the intermediate time. I have some rough memoranda of the days before I was taken ill, and some entries in a mem. book from the 15th February. The longest spell of illness I remember, since a boy. May it have done me good, in soul and in body. Of the latter I am assured by my doctor—for the former I shall set down little, as yet, save that I have had leisure to think of many things, and these thoughts were NOT *aegri somnia*. I am told that for a short time, at the beginning, I was in danger. Is not *that* enough to write?"

*"Jan. 26th.*

"This was the day, or rather it was this night, that I was 'taken ill,' and the old phrase fits. I had not meant to go to the *Punch* dinner, for I had a bad pain in my wrist, and the weather was very cold, but a letter from M. L., saying that *he* was forbidden to come to

## SERIOUSLY ILL

town, compelled me to go. I attended, and the cut was my suggestion.\* Came home in a close cab, talked a good while with E. and went up. As I began to undress I was seized with violent shivers, which lasted a long time after I was in bed. I have no particular recollection of details, for I kept no notes, but here began my long illness."

" Jan. 27th.

" To-night I knocked up, and the doctor, Edgar Barker, was sent for. And E. managed to see Sir Henry Thompson, and somehow got him to offer to assist E. Barker, which gave *her* confidence, and which was therefore well. I think that it was to-night that they saw me, and examined my legs. On the left there were darkish veins. There was talk of erysipelas, but this was soon got over. But I afterwards heard that there was congestion, or rather apprehended congestion, of the liver, and that there was doubt as to whether the doctors would succeed. A nurse was ordered—I have never had one since I was a child. And so I was regularly laid up, with all the sick-room appliances. I had to give up all work, which was most distressing to me, but somehow things shaped

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\* " John Bright's New Reform Bill—' Reform Yourselves.' " John Bright was by no means one of *Punch's* favourites. Nevertheless the truth embodied in the peroration to his great speech at Birmingham on Jan. 11th could not be ignored. " If we could subtract," he said, " from the ignorance, the poverty, the suffering, the sickness and the crime, which are now witnessed amongst us, the ignorance, the poverty, the suffering and the crime which are caused by one single, but most prevalent, bad habit or vice—the drinking needlessly of that which destroys body and mind and home and family—do we not all feel that this country would be changed, and so changed for the better, that it would be almost impossible for us to know it again ? "



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

themselves, and every one behaved very kindly and considerately."

" Jan. 29th.

" By means of an arrangement with Grindlays, I paid my chief Life Assurance, and the thought that the receipt was in the tin box behind my head comforted me more, during my illness, than I can well say."

" Feb. 3rd.

" I caused the paragraph below to be put into the *Pall Mall*, partly to save myself trouble, partly because such exaggerated nonsense gets into the papers. It was copied, of course, and produced a crop of civilities, more or less genuine.

" *Pall Mall Gazette* (written in red ink).

" ' We regret to hear that Mr. Shirley Brooks is lying seriously ill at his house in the Regent's Park. Overwork and an attack of gout had unfavourably prepared Mr. Brooks for the cold of last week, and on Wednesday week (after presiding at the *Punch* dinner, in the absence from illness of Mr. Mark Lemon), Mr. Brooks was seized with spasms and shiverings, which prostrated him. His medical advisers report favourably of the case, but have strictly forbidden the least attention to business or the reception of visitors.' "

Under date Feb. 4th he pastes into the diary the following paragraph written by J. W. Davison, in the *Musical World* :—

" All the world will regret that Mr. Shirley Brooks has been seriously ill ; all the world will rejoice that our best modern essayist and brightest conversational wit is pronounced by Sir Henry Thompson to be out of danger."

## A SICK MAN'S JOKE

" Feb. 16th.

" N.B.—I have always, during my illness, read the papers thoroughly."

" Feb. 18th.

" My knees became gouty, and there was a relapse, as they called it. . . . Sent Kiki a cut, good, about this, but, as usual, an artist never sees what you see."\*

" March 3rd.

" Good story about Nathaniel Cooke† and all his kin going to hear N. C.'s son, a young parson, preach his first sermon, and the youth's text being 'Suffer me first to go and bury my father.' Mrs. C. is said to have suggested his being stopped!"

" March 5th.

" A bad day for me. Miss Matthews kindly brought the carriage, with wraps, etc., and E. and I went with her for a drive twice round the Park. I enjoyed it hugely, but there was an E. wind, which brought back the gout, and sent me back to bed for many days."

" March 6th.

" Got up, but found myself so bad that I went to bed again."

" March 12th.

" A civility in the Press, but it says I have no humour. It lies. I am overflowing with humour, but I don't

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\* Du Maurier did see it after many days, *vide* "The Invalid Author," on April 20th. The legend runs as follows:—

" *Wife.* 'Why, nurse is reading a book, darling! Who gave it her?'

" *Husband* (in bed). 'I did, my dear.'

" *Wife.* 'What book is it?'

" *Husband.* 'It's my last.'

" *Wife.* 'Darling! when you *knew* how important it is that *she* shouldn't go to sleep!'"

† Herbert Ingram's partner.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

show it! Heard from Robert Cooke—am engaged to lecture on the 5th prox., and am as likely to pull in the O. and C. boat race.”

“ *March 16th.*

“ Sent Keene, Charles, an idea for a cut. It came out in No. 1499, ‘*Emollit mores,*’ only the meaning of the Latin is destroyed by the speaker not being a votary of ‘art.’ ” \*

“ *March 19th.*

“ M. L. had concocted a very kind paragraph about me and the ‘Essence of P.’ for *Punch*, but I thought it too kind for such a paper, so cut it down to a few words. He says the ‘Essence’ is perpetually bothered for. A pensive public must wait—as I do.”

“ *April 3rd.*

“ There is a book by one Cecil Hay, full of personal sketches, and I am said to figure therein as ‘Mr. Synical Suave.’ Didn’t know that I was either, *mais n’importe.* ” †

“ *April 7th.*

“ Barker came, saw me in my den, and after a careful examination, declared me to be ‘Renovated, and discharged cured,’ and said he should not visit me again. Listened to my heart, and said it was exactly as when he first did so, that this was a good sign, as it had been ‘tried’ by the illness. But I am not to run fast, or upstairs. I thanked him for all his attention, of course. *D. G. again* and always.”

“ *April 11th.*

“ Walked out, received the homage of my tradesmen, Williams especially bawling over his fishes that he was glad to see me.”

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\* *Vide Punch*, April 2nd, p. 136.

† Quoted in a previous chapter.

## WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

" *April 13th.*

" The day being warm, I went off to Whitefriars, and d. with *Punch*, first time since 26th Jan. Cordially welcomed by the unusually small party—there were M. L., P. L., Sketchley, W. H. B., (Fred away because of Pater, but they say needlessly alarmed), S. B., H. M., and Jackides. I suggested my cut of 'Mrs. Phaëton,' which was assented to."\*

' *April 16th.*

" Went with E. to the opening of the new Vaudeville. . . . Montagu spoke my Address, not very perfectly, but with plaudit, and then we came away." †

' *April 18th.*

" Tenniel has made a fine double cut of Mrs. Phaëton, but it wants a word or two of explanation."

' *April 22nd.*

" Wrote 'Essence of Parliament' ‡—as I write the proof is brought me."

' *April 29th.*

" At 3 to the Private View of the Royal Academy. Everybody there, and it was a sort of re-entry into society for me—I was congratulated to an enormous extent."

At the Private View he has the pleasure of seeing Mrs. Frank Romer's first Academy picture, and, determined that his young friend's picture should not

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\* This cartoon might fitly be published to-day. It illustrates the growing desire on the part of women to obtain the electoral franchise. Phaëton, a woman, is represented driving the chariot of the sun, in which are harnessed three steeds named "Taxation," "Foreign Affairs," and "Legislation." John Bull stands by nursing a baby.

† H. J. Montague, at that time partner in the Vaudeville. Shirley was often weak about the spelling of names.

‡ For the first time since his illness, to which in the first paragraphs he makes covert allusion.

SHIRLEY BROOKS

be overlooked, does a little pulling of the strings on her behalf :—

S. B. TO MRS. F. ROMER (MRS. JOPLING ROWE).

“ 18<sup>th</sup> May, 1870.

“ MY DEAR MRS. FRANK,

“ I was glad to see this notice (enclosed), slight as it is, for I mentioned the picture to the critic at the Private View, and feared he had forgotten it. I also spoke to Sala, he put in a word, but I hope he will give another notice. The *Era* shall be rectified this week,\* and I have also written to another quarter. You don't *want* this, as you are making your way capitably by yourself, but in this bustling age all these things have a certain use.

“ Always yours faithfully,

“ SHIRLEY BROOKS.

S. B. TO MISS MATTHEWS.

“ 6 KENT TERRACE,

“ REGENT'S PARK,

“ N.W.

“ Monday.

“ Wind, N.N.N.

“ E.E.E.

“ Fires.

“ 9<sup>th</sup> May, 1870.

“ MY DEAR MISS MATTHEWS,

\* \* \* \* \*

“ The Bishop came, but though very affable, he did not tell me any very good stories—now ‘ S. Winchester ’ † is full of them—(I mean ‘ S. Winton,’ by the way), but I heard one from a lady. She was remarking, to a sort

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\* It had “ masculinified ” the young artist's name.

† Samuel Wilberforce.

## ILLNESS OF MARK LEMON

of petitioner for her charity, on the state of his wardrobe, and he said, "Yes, my lady. I dresses with a needle, and I undresses with a knife."

"I dare say that you have been up to town, and have seen the Pictures, so I need say nothing about the Private View. There seemed 'a many' good things, but nothing great, and Gérôme's 'Execution of Ney' is the most powerful work in the rooms. I mentioned this fact to sundry Academicians, who did not seem to see it.\* . . .

"Ever yours faithfully,  
"SHIRLEY BROOKS."

"*May 9th.*

"Byron† is in a rage, because the *Sunday Times* has accused him of plagiarism, in a song in *Punch*—bosh, but we'll kick the *S.T.* when the kickable region happens to turn our way."

Mark Lemon was now lying very ill at Crawley.

"*May 10th.*

"Resolved to go and see dear Mark Lemon, though not without misgivings lest the visit should perturb him. Down by 11.40 from Victoria. Just at the gate saw Lally, who went back with me. M. L. was in the summer-house, so I first went into the parlour. They were rejoiced to see me. Polly flew at me—there were Mrs. L., Betty, Katie. Thy did not think that M. wanted warning, so I went out to him. I was not much shocked at his appearance, though he looked haggard, and there were swellings under his eyes. . . .

". . . I am now glad I went down, though to see my poor friend so is distressing. I think it did him good to see me—his farewell was very affectionate.

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\* Not unnaturally, Gérôme being a Frenchman!

† H. J. Byron, the playwright, who was a casual contributor.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

'I shall not see you again this week,' he said. 'No,' I said, 'I shall not come down again this week.' '\*

" *May 21st.*

" Met E. and we went down to the College to see the athletics. Very splendid day, but awfully hot. Rego, who was looking particularly well, and may I say, handsome, ran, but as he expected, not to any great purpose, but he was third in the great Consolation race. I lounged about, smoked, had slight refreshments, chatted, and watched the excellent sports, and should have been quite happy but that I had to get back for *Punch*, and expected to miss the late train. Dr. Schmidt asked me to make a speech when the prizes were given away. I could not refuse, and it was not bad fun, sitting in the centre of the crowd of boys and of ladies. I never spoke in the open-air before. E. said 'it was a capital speech'—it was very short."

" *May 22nd.*

" Since writing the above lines I have lost the oldest and dearest friend I had in the world, except my wife. *Mark Lemon* died rather before 8 in the morning of Monday the 23rd. *Requiescat in pace!* A better man, with a good man's faults, which are part of his goodness, I have never known. Charles Sabine was as good. But I will write down nothing, as yet, but occurrences. I shall be able to print something, and I will not forestall."

" *May 23rd.*

" Letter from Polly Lemon, with a kind message from Mark, dictated yesterday. Telegram from Harry, announcing his 'good father's' death. Aye, he *was* a good father. . . .

" . . . Business must be done, though friends die,

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\* This was their last meeting.

## DEATH OF MARK LEMON

and so it will be when I am gone. We tried to make a picture, on which I had written T. on Sunday, but we were out of tune. From him I went to the 'Bedford' for a few minutes, and so to Whitefriars. We were to have met, a small party, to-night at the 'Bedford,' but this was put off, and only Tenniel and I, and B. & E. dined in a private room at the 'Rainbow,' upstairs. A y cut was adopted—about the race, *i.e.*, *Punch* and various characters riding, and he winning—neither new or good, but good enough for the Derby idiots—as *now* think 'em—having gone to 7 or 8 Derbies. We stopped into silence at times, but there was no demonstration of sorrow—which was best. . . . Wrote some lines about *it*, to *Pall Mall Gazette*, which Fred sent and which appeared, with the addition I asked for, being in no mood to turn sentences. Old George Quikshank called on me at Whitefriars to express his regret, or rather to talk about himself and end with a a-total moral, which I snubbed. Never cared for this man, and yet he is a wondrous artist in a limited way. E. had had Lillie with her, and Ewing had called, and also written to offer to go to Crawley and make a cast with a view to a bust. It would, if successful, be a good thing for him, and pleasant for us."

*May 24th.*

"Thought a good deal, in bed, about Ewing's proposal—were men only concerned it would be matter of course, but women may have a reluctance to have the features of their sacred dead touched, although fully that such features may be preserved for years. But resolved to risk it, and take Ewing down, first sending a long and careful preparatory telegram to Polly. Down with Ewing by the 11.50, and Harry, much disturbed by the event, met us. The matter was to be left entirely to *me*. I would know what He



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

would have wished. I knew, I said, that he would have desired that those who loved him should have a memorial of him, and that he had been glad when John Leech's face had been so preserved. To the Cottage. Ewing, with fit instinct, waited in the garden with his assistant. I saw Lally, Betty, and Polly, and they seemed—no, they *were* comforted in a measure by seeing me. Then I went into the drawing-room, in which lay, in an oak shell, the remains of my dear friend—very noble in death. The cast was taken tenderly, rapidly, reverently, and Ewing said that it was admirable. All vestiges of the work were cleansed utterly away, and for the last time, having touched hand and brow, I looked at my friend of 20 years, my faithfulest friend, and left the dead. After the hospitalities, never forgotten there, I took Ewing away, to leave the girls with their mother, and we went to Lally's, and smoked, and laughed with her pretty children, Daisy and Ethel, till 4, when Ewing went away with his man. Walked about the garden with Polly (she talked excitedly and rapidly), and heard much from her, and I also heard much from Harry. Clear that towards the very last day there were wanderings, but he recovered himself. H. thinks that his last word was the name of his wife—and it may well have been. *She* could not see me, but sent me all loving messages—I have the love of this household. The Rev. Mr. Blaker came, and at Polly's wish, I drove over with him to Ifield, and in the churchyard looked at the places which would serve for the grave. My choice was confirmed by Polly, on our return. B. spoke of the enormous good the Lemons had done in the two parishes—much more than money could do. . . . So for the last time I left Mark Lemon in his much-loved house."

The same day he wrote :—

## LEMON'S DEATH-MASK

S. B. TO PERCIVAL LEIGH.

" 6 KENT TERRACE,  
" REGENT'S PARK,  
" N.W.

" *Tuesday (May 24th).*

" MY DEAR LEIGH,

" Thanks for your kind note. For myself, I am well enough, and I am now going down to Crawley. I would willingly have delayed my visit, but there is a reason for its being paid to-day, which I will tell you hereafter. It is not easy, it is hardly possible, to realize what has occurred or that we shall not hear the genial voice again—*here*—but the impression deepens, painfully, every hour. However, *moriendum est semel omnibus*, a cold consolation. Happily we have a better.

" Ever yours faithfully,  
" S. B.

" Tenniel and I have hammered out a double cut which he thinks he can make effective.

" He 'died quite gently and as if going to sleep.'

" P. Leigh, Esq."

" *May 26th.*

" A very hard day's work, to get free for to-morrow. Sent paragraph to the *Pall Mall Gazette* as to the funeral. Wrote

" Leader for *Illustrated*.

" Memorial of M. L. for *Punch*.

" The *H. N.* for India.

" The Derby prophecy for *Punch*.

Ewing wrote to ask us to come to-day and see what he had done towards bust. Of course, I could not get away, but E. went, and returned with a most favourable account. . . . I was exceedingly tired to-day."

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

This is what he wrote in the *Illustrated London News* :—

### “NOTHING IN THE PAPERS.

“ I devote a few lines, only, to a record—I make it nothing more—of a death which cannot as yet be spoken of in this column with any effort to do justice to the subject. A close personal friendship of more than twenty years has suddenly ceased—Mark Lemon has been called to his rest. Be this said, and nothing else thereon, by one who had hoped that many another year of that friendship would have been permitted by the Supreme Will. Hereafter, some attempt will be made by me to prepare for this journal a memorial that may be less unworthy of the event, at present for me and for many another an affliction which has to be realised, not written about. Meantime, I venture, in right of that long intimacy, which now seems to have been so short, to say to those who have already given kindly and eloquent public utterance to their regrets, that such testimony of honour for the departed, though it cannot console those mourners whose grief is most sacred of all, has yet been welcome to a saddened and a darkened home.

“ S. B.”

In *Punch* he wrote the full-page memorial which all can read and of which the following must here suffice :—

“ ’Twas his pride to teach us so to bear  
Our blades, as he bore his, keep the edge keen,  
But strike above the belt : and ever wear,  
The armour of a conscience clear and clean.

\* \* \*

“ Never self-seeking, keen for others’ rise  
And gain, before his own, he loved to see  
Young wrestlers of his training win the prize,  
Nor asked what *his* part of the prize should be.”

## WHO WILL BE EDITOR ?

*May 27th.*

“ . . . And so we laid him to rest. We loved him, better than others whom we had buried, but I saw no tears, and I shed none. . . . Home. Emily had . . . at the Y.'s—anything rather than loneliness. Glad to sleep. ‘*He sleeps well.*’ ”

*May 28th.*

“ Heard from Leigh, who has been asked to write memoir of M. L. for the *Graphic*. He says the *John Bull* names Harry Lemon as the new Editor ! ”

S. B. TO PERCIVAL LEIGH.

“ 6 KENT TERRACE,

“ REGENT'S PARK,

“ 29th May, 1870.

MY DEAR LEIGH,

“ Your considerateness in such a matter is exactly, as they say in Japan, ‘behaviour that was to be expected.’ But I can see no possible objection to your writing the memoir, if it seems good to you. I could, of course, do nothing for the *Graphic* because it is in antagonism to my old friends,\* but for the sake of the departed, I should be glad to see a good memoir of him here, and elsewhere. I have undertaken one for the *Illustrated*, but it will be very difficult, as to the early part, for I know but little of his youthful life, and I will pass over this rapidly, and confine myself to what I really know.

“ I don't think the *John Bull* has made a right guess. † Theirs is amusing to those who know the person indicated. I have also been told of another, Mr. Gilbert, the dramatist, but am also ‘unconvinced’ as to him. *I dare say we shall hear more on Tuesday.* ”

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\* The proprietors of the *Illustrated London News*

† As to who was to be the new editor.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

" Sad things have happened since I sat down *last* Sunday for my quiet correspondence, etc. It seems like a dream.

" *Do* call at Mr. Ewing's, and see the bust. He is specially prepared to welcome *you*, and I think you will like his work, and him. 8 George St., Hanover Square, (nearly opposite the church), and his name on the door—also look at his other busts, and make him tell you who they are.

" Ever yours,  
" S. B."

" *May 31st.*

" Went to Whitefriars—saw W. B. and F. M. E. and they *offered me*

*the Editorship of 'Punch.'* I *accepted it.\**

Business arrangements deferred till another meeting, but this talk held now that announcement might be made at dinner. . . . then we went to Purfleet, Tenniel joining us by train. . . . This was the party:—

" Leigh. C. Keene. Tom Agnew. Burnand. Sketchley.  
Fred. W. H. B.

" Tenniel. S. B. Wm. Agnew. Horace Mayhew.

After d., W. B. made the necessary little speech, which he did in good taste. The announcement was most kindly received by all, and Leigh, as the oldest, rose and expressed the great satisfaction felt. My health. I spoke shortly, not well, and begged their co-operation in the old spirit. Perhaps when we were all there—I mean all together at the old place, I might say more. Whether Elijah's mantle might have fallen on Elisha, or not, he would seek to be true to them and the work. We all came up together in a saloon carriage. . . . So home, found Emily and Lillie, who had been to the

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\* These words are written in red ink.

## APPOINTED EDITOR OF "PUNCH"

French play. Told them that the Ed. of *P.* had the honour to salute them, and had L.'s congratulations, and when she had gone, Emily's kiss. I hope the change is for the good of those I love, and believing this, I am deeply thankful, but I have lost a dear friend. We are in God's hand."

S. B. TO MISS MATTHEWS.

"1st June, 1870.

"MY DEAR MISS MATTHEWS,

". . . Yesterday I accepted the Editorship of *Punch*. It will be a tie, and give me trouble, but I seem to have been generally expected to take the situation, and it is not good to disappoint General Expectations, as he is a stern officer. Wish me good fortune—but I know you do.

"I was offered a seat on a four-horse coach for the Derby, alongside M. Gustave Doré. But I am here. Who says I have no self-denial? Besides, I have seen a Derby or two, and don't want to see any more.

"Ever yours faithfully,

"SHIRLEY BROOKS.

"Miss Matthews."

The death of Mark Lemon came as a violent shock to Shirley on the top of his own severe illness, and, proud as he was to find himself in the editorial chair of the journal he loved so well, the honour was but poor compensation to him for the loss of his old and much-loved chief. At first he almost shrank from the great responsibility of the office, "but," writes Mr. Silver to me, "it is certain that he bravely did his best, in spite of failing health and spirits, to follow worthily the course pursued by the first Editor."

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

“ We feel,” wrote Shirley himself, “ that the best homage we can pay to him who is gone before, the one tribute which, had he foreseen this early summons to his rest, he would have desired or permitted, is to declare our united resolve that, to the best of our ability, our future work for this Journal shall be done in the spirit long and lovingly taught us by the loved and revered friend who has passed to the reward of a noble life.” And, short though Shirley’s tenure of his great position was to be, who shall say that he did not during those few years loyally and nobly act up to the principles which he had so clearly enunciated—principles tersely expressed by Thackeray, “ May *Punch* laugh honestly, hit no foul blow, and tell the truth when at his very broadest grin—never forgetting that if Fun is good, Truth is still better, and Love best of all ! ”

Fortunately for the paper, he had long been Mark Lemon’s right-hand man. He had been the power behind the throne. He was steeped in its traditions. *Punch* was, for him, the first paper in the world. He had gone through the mill himself. He had done every kind of work on its literary side. He knew where to go to get the best in every department.

But much and varied as the work was which he had done for *Punch*, it was, I think, his personality, his influence, his whole-hearted devotion to the paper’s interests, his infectious enthusiasm, his sudden accesses of seriousness in the midst of laughter, his fertility of resource, that rendered him most fitted for his high position. Here is what Sir Francis Burnand, when

## “ PRIMUS INTER PARES ”

himself Editor of *Punch*, wrote of his former chief thirty years later in the *Pall Mall Magazine* :—

“ Shirley Brooks, our editor after Mark, was handsome, sparkling-eyed, brilliant in conversation, quick-tempered yet easy-going, and the cheeriest of cheery boon companions. Perhaps had he been less cheery he might have lasted longer. He had a facile knack of versifying, and could write a stinging epigram, a genial paragraph, or a light and airy article, according to his humour at the moment, or the special requirements of the time and circumstances. He might have done well as a novelist or dramatist, had he not been gifted with a fatal facility for journalism. Long before he assumed the reins he had been our Cartoon Suggester-in-Chief, and had made a decided hit with his ‘ Essence of Parliament,’ for which his early apprenticeship in the gallery of the House had especially qualified him. Tom Taylor couldn’t touch him in this line, though he subsequently attempted it. Shirley Brooks was a warm-hearted friend and a bitter enemy, but his enmity was not of long duration.”

We may believe that it was no easy task which Shirley had undertaken. It needed a light hand to drive, or rather I should say handle, such a team as he found under his guidance. Keene, Tenniel, Leigh, Mayhew, Sketchley, Tom Taylor, and last but not least, Burnand, were one and all men who had their own wills, their own opinions, their own strong idiosyncrasies. They were no mere spiritless subordinates whose opinions could be disregarded. They were in no sense the puppets of their chief. He was not a musician playing tunes upon an instrument, every note of which was obedient to his touch. They were men who had



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

proved themselves. They were equals. He might be nominally dictator, nominally *primus inter pares*. The final responsibility might, rest with him. But, on all important matters he was but chief of a cabinet, whose united opinion must be allowed to over-ride his own. And it is admitted on all hands that Shirley, the Editor, was no different from Shirley, Lemon's right-hand man. "Do you feel bigger?" said Mr. Frith. "No, I don't," said Shirley. Increased work and responsibility of course there was, but assumption of superiority there was not.

Indeed, it is eloquent of the man's unspoiled kindness and good-nature to find him, even at such a crisis, not too busy to copy out a paragraph in a newspaper lest a struggling young friend should have failed to see it.

S. B. TO MRS. F. ROMER (MRS. JOPLING ROWE).

"DEAR MRS. FRANK,

"There is a kind word for you in to-day's *Athenæum*. I copied it this morning, but forgot to post the letter. Probably Frank may have seen and bought the paper, but I mention it."

"Always yours faithfully,

"S. BROOKS.

"Mrs. F. Romer."

A glance through the diary of this year shows it fuller than ever of allusions to people of importance in their day:—

Mrs. Rousby (the actress): ["She is so pretty—and pale"]; George Meredith: ["who abused me for not doing less journalism and more fiction. Easy to talk but not so easy to feed young ravens"]; Tinsley, the publisher: ["sorry for my illness, and

## PEOPLE OF IMPORTANCE

offering any of a string of books. It is really very civil. I never did much for him. He was as good as his word and sent some twenty volumes, chiefly novels, acceptable in one's state"]; Charles Keene: ["a gentleman is C. K."]; Mrs. Albert Smith (Mary Keeley): ["what a dainty, bright, saucy, yet kindly little thing I remember her. She played in the 'Creole' and 'Wigwam' for me"]; George Hodder: ["I don't know when I have had such a good laugh as at his platitudes (in the Memoirs). However, it is very ungrateful, for he writes gushingly of me, owns to a kindness I had forgotten and prints, as another, a letter I have equally forgotten, but which was only a means of saving his feelings in regard to sundry verses which would *not* do for *Once a Week*"]; Ledger: ["very unhappy because I suggest giving up the *Era*"]; Lord Tenterden: ["a gentlemanly old man for whom I had a liking"]; Sir Charles Russell (afterwards Lord Russell of Killowen): ["who sends me an idea for a sketch, but as it would make young ladies stand on their heads, on the ice, I take it the value is not large"]; Magee, Bishop of Peterborough: ["a small, dark, keen-eyed man, of whom I reserve my ideas. Very pleasant, of course, like all bishops"]; Mrs. Tom Wood: ["who insists on my using the female name 'Gladys' in some novel. She meant it for her last born, but this came up boy"]; Charles Reade: ["At his play, 'Free Labour,' there were but three people in the stalls and they went away after the first act"]; J. W. Nicholson: ["wrote to him with my photograph, 'We have heard the chimes at midnight and the clocks a trifle later,' as I told him"]; Newman Hall: ["whom I talked to and liked. He has been citing 'Lothair'"]

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\* As a matter of fact he continued his contributions until his death.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

in his ministrations”]; the Burnands: [“ all very pleasant, and the children are very nice—but it is sad to see them with mourning signs.\* He and I always talk seriously on the Catholic Faith, never for mere argument”]; “ Pater ” Evans: [“ another dear old friend is lost to me in *this* world, but he has his reward”]; Lord Clarendon: [“ a fine old Whig, fond of cigars”]; Vizetelly: [“ said in the papers to be drowned at Margate. He is not, and is thought to have sent the par. to the *P. M. Gazette*, to get himself talked about”]; Leslie Stephen: [“ I seconded him for the ‘Garrick’”]; Sterndale Bennett: [“ always very cordial”]; Ferdinand de Lesseps: [“ Fuller offered to present me to him, but I did not care about it, for which I suppose I ought to be ashamed, but my hero-worship is limited, and not in the engineering line. I have known many engineers”]; Sir Henry Bulwer (next year created Lord Dalling and Bulwer); Bellew: [“ his dinners always good, but one mixes too many things”]; Lord O’Hagan: [“ I like him”]; Theophilus Burnand: [“ he is a most pleasant person and gives a perfect dinner. Moreover his house is full of fine pictures. I was much pleased to hear from our host of his purchase of dear old John Phillip’s picture (hanging in the drawing-room), The Priest telling tales over the brazier, to laughing women. P. asked £600, but B. insisted on giving him £800. . . . B. has been (since) offered £3,500 for it”]; Frederick Clay: [“ asked me to write a Peace song for Santley, but the next news made it rather needless we thought, as peace might come before we could arrange the howl for it”]; Tom Taylor: [“ wrote to him for a *good* poem, and he

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\* For their mother, who had died on April 10th, at the age of twenty-eight, and to whom Shirley makes tenderest allusion in his diary of that date.

## A WORTHY SUCCESSOR TO LEMON

sent me one better than usual”]; Arcedekné : [“ last time to see my old friend ‘ Archy,’ as we all called him. He died 31st May, 1871 ”]; Lord Lytton : [“ reading his ‘ King Arthur ’ (new edition sent me by publisher). Much cleverness . . . but no poetry”]; Robert Carruthers of the *Inverness Courier* : [“ a brave old man ”]; Mrs. Romer (now Mrs. Jopling Rowe) : [“ her baby to be christened and I have promised to be godfather. For I like this struggling, clever little artist ”]; Mrs. Lynn Linton : [“ sends me something for *Punch*. I should be very glad to use it. Sent it to be set up ”]; Mrs. Mark Lemon : [“ who wishes me to write an inscription for M. L.’s tomb ”]; Tom Hood : [“ who points out that an initial letter used in *Punch* is copied from George Cruikshank ”]; Garibaldi : [“ I hope they will not catch (and shoot) the brave old stupid ”]; Lady Beaumont\* : [“ died to-day (Dec. 9th, 1870). To think of her whom we saw under that porch, all life and smiles, being borne away from it to the pretty church in which we stood with her.”]

From the diary :—

“ *June 2nd.*

“ A nice note from Kiki—any other editor than myself would have been to him ‘ an unnatural offence.’ My words on M. L. made Mrs. du M. weep. Comforted to think M. L. knew he loved him well.”

“ *June 3rd.* [He has pasted in the following from the *Athenæum*.]

“ We are authorised to announce that *Punch* has been fortunate enough to find its second editor in Mr. Shirley Brooks, who, although he enters on office at a rather mature period of life, is in the fulness of intellectual vigour, and in every respect worthy to occupy the place so long held by Mr. Mark Lemon.

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\* Wife of Sir G. H. Beaumont, Bart.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

“ ‘Mature’ be hanged. Nevertheless, *c'est vrai*. . . . Other papers have the new appointment. I receive many letters, speaking of my entire fitness for the work. Of this it would be idiotic in me, writing in my own diary, to express a doubt, for I feel none—it *is* my sort of work.”

“ *June 4th.*

“ ‘Ouida,’ Miss de la Ramée, called on E. Made rather a favourable impression, but finished by saying, in reference to the demand for silence when a person is singing, that she heard ‘hush, hush’ the other night, and immediately remarked that she had heard such cries in a minor theatre, but not in drawing-rooms, and that as she talked better than others, *she* ought to be listened to. There is something in the notion, only it doesn’t come well from the good talker. It is Johnsonian, which a woman should not be.”

“ *June 10th.*

“ *Charles Dickens has died suddenly.* He was seized with a fit of paralysis on Wednesday, at dinner, and remained unconscious until the end, a little after 6 yesterday afternoon. Maclise, Lemon, Dickens, in two months. . . . He called, during my illness. I was about to write to him, as to his offer to use his influence with Gladstone for a pension for Mrs. Lemon, and I waited only to be told that some such provision was needful and would be welcome. Wrote a few lines about him as leader for *H. N.* . . .”

“ *June 12th.*

“ Dear old Pater\* still lingers, is perfectly conscious of the approach of the end, and when they can make out the words he is using to himself, they are heard to be what a dying man should say, if he can. Hearing

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\* Frederick Mullett Evans died on June 25th. He was one of the original partners in the firm of Bradbury & Evans.

## SALARY AS EDITOR

that I was there, he 'sent his Love to me,' by Amy. I sent him mine, by Fred, and both messages were from the heart."

" June 17th.

" Wrote Preface to Vol. 58, *Punch* (no, next day)—rather a good preface—E. thought a very good one."

" June 18th.

" *We propose to offer you a thousand guineas a year, as Editor, and six guineas a week for contributions.*"\* So spoke W. H. B. in the small room next Fred's, and I, as matter of form, took time to consider. . . .

" . . . . Letter from Polly at last, and a very nice one. 'I write to thank you in all our names for the papers and paragraphs you have sent, and for the memoirs written by you, especially in *Punch* and the *Illustrated News*. I know you don't want formal thanks, but will be better pleased to hear how reading your kind notices gratified and consoled us. Mother sends her love to Mrs. Brooks and yourself, and thanks you both most heartily for your excessive kindness. I express myself badly, but you will understand my meaning.' "

" June 20th.

" At breakfast E. learned that Tilley had called because Bellett (tutor of boys here on holidays), had told him that one of the International boys had been drowned! I felt that we had no cause for fear, but I telegraphed to Core, and then found in the *Times* a par. I had overlooked. It was true—one of the Webbers went to bathe on Saturday, and was drowned. Then came the telegram (answer in 1½ hours), 'Too true.' Later came a letter from Rego, with the details. He had arrived while the search for the body was being

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\* The italicised words are written in red ink.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

desire that he should stand sponsor. Quick to read between the lines he replied :—

S. B. TO MRS. F. ROMER (MRS. JOPLING ROWE).

“ MY DEAR MRS. FRANK,

“ I have been at Brighton since Saturday, and have run up to-day for the dinner, and hope to get back again to-night till Saturday. I am too late to answer your question to any purpose. I believe, however, that Mr. Frith has returned to Ramsgate (11 Royal Crescent) but I am not quite sure. As regards the more interesting matter, I know that it is a difficult thing to get hold of the sort of sponsor (male) that one desires, and I am glad to see that the Church commission is prepared to recommend the virtual abolition of the office, by letting the papa be god-papa also, which is the more reasonable, as he would look somewhat blue if the other godfather walked into the house and insisted on beginning the religious education of the *nouveau Chrétien*. I don't know how to advise you in the matter, but I can only say that if you have thought over everyone else, and nobody pleases you, you let me know. I think it is possible that I know a rather stout party, of tolerably decent character (considering his literary avocations) who might be got at by me, as I believe I stand better with him than most people. But I hope you will find a much better one, and I only mention this as you may perhaps have meant I should recommend somebody. I shall be up again on Saturday for my usual hard day's work. I write in haste and with kind regards to your husband  
am,

“ Very faithfully yours,

“ SHIRLEY BROOKS.”

The baby was christened “ Hilda Louise Shirley.”

## “PUNCH” AND THE “SATURDAY REVIEW

“ July 2nd.

“ By the way, saw an impertinent reference to *P.* in *Saturday Review*, so indited an impertinent paragraph in reply. I think we must fight when we get hold of a worthy adversary. And it will do *nobody* any harm to know that the *S.R.* has an unfriendly eye upon us.”\*

“ July 8th.

“ We went to Greenwich in the ‘Cupid’ boat, and d. at the ‘Ship,’ in the ‘Bellot’ room.

John H. A(gnew)	T. A(gnew)
W. H. B(radbury).	Fred Evans.
S. B.	W. Agnew.

Usual dinner—there is no invention or improvement at these hotels. (N.B.—I have wanted to know when folks began to eat white-bait here. The recently published Malmesbury ‘Letters’ show that Mrs. Harris dined at Greenwich, on ‘the smallest fish she had ever seen, called white-bait,’ in 1763.) W. B. proposed my health, as editor. I answered shortly, and asked a glass to the memory of dear old Mark. This dinner was in honour of my inauguration. We came up by rail to Charing X. Mem.—Took E. in my cab to Bond St., and gave her £2 to buy herself some little trifle in memory of the inauguration aforesaid—she does not care for jewellery, so I wished her to please herself, poor thing. Nobody can be less extravagant on herself, and I often wish she were more so.”

“ July 9th.

“ The Dickens sale to-day—things fetched outrageous prices. Agnews gave 1,000 guineas for Frith’s ‘Dolly

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\* The *Saturday Review* had advised James Grant to retire from the editorship of the *Morning Advertiser* because it had assailed the Pope, citing as an example Doyle’s retirement from *Punch* for a like reason. Shirley’s reply, entitled “Just Worth Mentioning,” was, it must be confessed, not in his happiest manner.



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

Varden.' The stuffed raven, 120 guineas—to be photographed, I suppose. . . .\*

" Funny thing at the ' Bedford '—I looked in at the little window, and saw Helen writing in a book—her diary. She had marked one day, she showed me, with very black marks. Of course, she was mysterious about it, and she having denied that it concerned a ' he,' I said: ' Then you had your pocket picked.' Her eyes became saucers. ' How strange you should say that ! ' It was so, in an omnibus, and she lost a good deal of money, and had told nobody. My fluke was prompted by a recollection of what happened to poor dear Emily, in New Inn days—she was robbed on her way to see me."

" *July 11th.*

" E. called on Mrs. Dickens, first time since the death. Describes her as looking well, being calm, and speaking of matters with a certain becoming dignity. Is resolved not to allow Forster, or any other biographer, to allege that she did not make D. a happy husband, having letters after the birth of her ninth child, in which D. writes like a lover. Her eldest daughter visited her and declared that the separation between *them* had resulted solely from her, Mary's, own self-will. Miss H. has also visited her—I will not write about this, but the affair is to the honour of Mrs. D.'s heart. I imagine she has not been left much, but young C. D. says she shall receive the same as before."

" *July 12th.*

" It seems to be thought that the question, Peace or War, † may be settled to-day. Much exercised in

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\* Shirley's biographer may perhaps intrude for a moment to say that Landor's bust which fetched £25 at the Dickens' sale, was bought by him thirty years later for four shillings and sixpence. It arrived at his house in a wheel-barrow.

† Between France and Prussia.

## TENNIEL'S LOYALTY

inventing a cut for *Punch*. But got some ideas, and at the d. (in 'Shakespeare,' 'Bedford,' present only Tenniel, Leigh, Fred and self), we actually made three cuts to do, in case there should be on Thursday, War, Peace, or Nothing Final."

" *July 14th.*

"The *Times* declaring peace, as indeed we had a right to expect it, had not war been resolved on and the Spanish business been a mere excuse, I went to Tenniel, and settled that we should have our Peace Cut, Napoleon as Bombastes. Which was drawn. But before it could be cut came war news. . . ."

" *July 15th.*

"War is declared by France against Prussia. Fred Evans (with Lloyd) came to tell me, 6 p.m. to-day. He is gone on to Tenniel, who, if he can, must knock out another cut. . . ."

"After d. went over to Tenniel (pain still in my side, and so on several days), and after easily showing him that his done cut would not do, got him to undertake a second, the 'Duel to the Death,'\* one of our three of Tuesday. He is a most loyal fellow, and threw over a pleasant garden-party to-morrow that he might work. He likes these things, therefore be it noted to his praise. To me work is preferable to garden and most other parties, except a small dinner with nice women."

" *July 16th.*

"War news confirmed. If these two armies, with all their arms of precision, and some new engines of

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\* Britannia vainly endeavouring to keep the peace, between Louis Napoleon and the King of Prussia, who stand ready for a duel. France (*log.*), "Pray stand back, Madam. You mean well; but this is an old family quarrel, and we must *fight it out.*"

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

which we hear, meet in a pitched battle, the slaughter will be horrible. I know not whether I regard *this* with sufficient awe, feeling that mere death is not an evil, if we consider, at all, what He is Who sends for us. But for the agony, and the *thirst* of the wounded men I cannot express my compassion."

" *July 27th.*

"The last cut, issued to-day, proved a grand success, the printers had to go to press several times. It was against Napoleon. But we are just, and the next is to apportion blame about equally."\*

That his sympathies were with Prussia is proved by the following letter :—

S. B. TO MISS MATTHEWS.

" 6 KENT TERRACE,

" REGENT'S PARK,

" N.W.

" 18th July, 1870.

" MY DEAR MISS MATTHEWS,

"To-day is cloudy enough, but it is very close. I apologize for writing to you without my coat—but what *is* good manners in these days? I heard last night that the Prince of Wales allowed a man to write out some rubbishing song for him, the man being coatless, and though the Princess came in, the fellow did not resume his costume. I shall turn Republican, especially in presence of this abominable war, got up by an Emperor for the most selfish reason. Don't you hope the Prussians will 'give it him hot?'

. . . " Ever yours faithfully,

" SHIRLEY BROOKS.

" Miss Matthews."

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\* That entitled "Six of one and half-a-dozen of the other."  
August 6th.

## ADMIRATION OF FRENCH PLUCK

But that he admired the French people as distinguished from their Emperor is as obvious from the following :—

S. B. TO PERCIVAL LEIGH.

“ ‘ PUNCH ’ OFFICE,  
“ 85 FLEET STREET,  
“ August 24th, 1870.

“ MY DEAR PROFESSOR,

“ I have 3 notes from you, and I am ashamed. It is not, you know, my way to neglect your letters, but somehow I thought I would let you alone till you should have settled down.

“ As regards P.B. make your *jottings* when you feel inclined. I will let you know in good time when to put the steam on. We want a very *light* number of the P.B. for this year, dialogue, fun, d— nonsense—but you understand. But give yourself a rest in the fresh air, as far as P.B. is concerned. I can't spare you from P.P., but short things, with a point, can be done *staccato*.

“ We had a noble dinner at the C. Palace, but the party was small. A four-horse omnibus, so we were out of the mob, which was some 28,000. We did not spoil our revel with business, but I go to meet Tenniel to-night at Kiki's, when we shall settle something. It would be *Punch-like* to recognize the pluck of the French, apart from the general question and L. N., and I think I see a way to do this, without departing from our line.

“ My folks have had enough of Beaumaris, so go over the way, literally; that is to Penmanmaur. *There* I hope to be able to join them for a day or two, once or twice, but it is a good way.

“ You know as much about war news as I do, so I

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

leave the red smear out of this—only, I don't see *proof* that Bazaine has cut his way out of the iron net.

“ Kindest regards to Mrs. Frederick, to your brother, and to those of the young ladies who do the undersigned the honour to be friends of

“ Your friend,

“ S. B.

“ P. Leigh, Esq.”

“ *August 9th.* (Staying at Pluckley with Lady Thompson.) \*

“ Found an epitaph in the churchyard :—

“ ‘ Death, with his overwhelming tide,  
Swept my loved partner from my side,  
And you of yours deprived may be  
As unexpectedly as *me.*’

Wrote Emily and sent her this, as she likes ‘ me ’ in speech better than ‘ I. ’ ”

“ *August 10th.*

“ Lady T. with me to train, 9.57. Said I would return if I could, but feared I should not be able. Cannon St., 12.15. Fleet St. wild with newspaper boys and purchasers. The Parisian excitement very fierce. I must stay and write latest news.”

“ *August 17th.*

“ War news, about now, getting more and more important, but I have had to write it so often that I am tired—my articles will show how closely I followed it. This was a week of blood.”

“ *August 31st.*

“ Much trouble over cut, but we got one, the finish of the duel, which proved astoundingly lucky—for we had meant that the Emperor was compelled though

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\* Wife of Sir Henry Thompson, Bart.

## “ THE DUEL DECIDED ”

wounded, to go on fighting, and in the interval he went down, and an alteration in the title made all right.\*”

“ *Sept. 2nd.*

“ Sent one A. S., of whom I know nothing, but that she is a young artist, deserted by her husband, 10s., which, by the way, she has not acknowledged. It was a bit of tender-heartedness—perhaps she is ugly.”

“ *Sept. 8th.*

“ Dined at Ellis Williams’s. P— sang song from the ‘ Gipsy’s Warning.’ I have not heard it for many a year—I gave it, in my green days, to a young lady on whom I was great spoons, and whose name I now recall only with an effort. She is well married—not to me. I think I used to write about her in a diary as Melanopia. ‘ Vere ish dat dairy [*sic*] now ? ’ In fact, where are many diaries of mine, kept rather fully ? ”

S. B. TO MISS MATTHEWS.

“ HENLEY BRIDGE,

“ *Tuesday, 13th Sept., '70.*

“ MY DEAR MISS MATTHEWS,

“ . . . I can’t get away much at this crisis. If peace broke out, I should have a holiday. I am quite tired of describing the fall of the Empire. I have done it in 5 leading articles—two for the *Home News*, one of them the Australian (I think as shouldn’t say it) not bad.

\* \* \* \*

“ The cut of me was a treachery †—it *was* Reginald’s joke, and I gave it Charles Keene, but he audaciously

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\* “ The Duel Decided.” Macmahon was defeated at Sedan on September 1st, and the Emperor surrendered. Evidently Shirley’s diary was “ written up ” a few days later.

· † *Vide* “ *In formâ Pauperis*,” *Punch*, Sept. 3rd, p. 102. Keene’s likeness of Shirley is certainly only passable.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

contends that it was a very good likeness. The 'Moke' lines were mine—written merely to fill up a hole, out of which I had taken something I did not care about—and they have had a great popularity. I think of having them printed on note-paper, as a standing 'answer to correspondents.\*' These creatures trouble me much—after a good read at a batch of their rubbish, I feel demoralized.

"Ever yours affectionately,  
"SHIRLEY BROOKS."

"Oct. 8th.

"A. I. came to tell me that one of our pirates, *Punch and Judy*, was collapsing, and to know whether Whitefriars would buy the title. I said I thought not, as there was nothing to prevent the vendors from bringing out 'Judy and Punch' next week, and moreover that we always let such things rot to death their own way."

"Oct. 9th.

"E. told me I was an old man. Which it is true, in a way."†

"Oct. 11th.

"I suggested the cut, 'A Quarter of a Million'—our contribution to the S. & W. fund. The Continent abuses us, let us take credit for what we really do."‡

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\* "He who thinks he makes a joke  
Usually's an awful moke."

† S. B. was fifty-five.

‡ England had subscribed £250,000 to the Sick and Wounded Fund. How her generosity was received in some quarters was strikingly illustrated in a letter written by Sir William Russell to the *Times*, in which he told of a German inspecting this "cut," and saying that he did not see anything generous in it at all. It was merely Britannia's conscience-money for the enormous percentage

## THE PRINCESS ALL FOR-LORNE

" Oct. 13th.

" Just now we are all talking about the intended marriage of Princess Louise to the Marquis of Lorne. It is liked—people are tired of German matches and pensions, but the matches have all turned out well, and our P. R. may be Empress of Germany."

" Oct. 16th.

" Wrote for *Punch*. It is well I do this, for nobody helps me much with short paragraphs and gibes. I wish I could find somebody to be to S. B. what S. B. was to M. L."

" Oct. 17th.

" Wrote Tom T. to do verses on the Princess's marriage, as he admires her. He did them well."\*

" Oct. 23rd.

" A ' vast ' of *Punch* letters, and exactly 150 with the joke about the Princess being ' All For-Lorne.' "†

" Nov. 6th.

" Waiting dinner, comes a telegram from Reginald that he will be home in an hour. ' Toby all right ' (this well thought of by the boy), and we surmised all

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she had made in selling arms to both combatants ! On reading this Shirley wrote with natural indignation : " It is about time to stop this said money, and think of our own poor, for we are promised a hard winter."

\* The verses were entitled " With a Loving Cup to Louise." Tenniel's accompanying cartoon (" A Real German Defeat ") represented the Marquis of Lorne carrying off his Royal bride to the chagrin of a crowd of German princelings. Being Anti-German the cut proved very popular, for, since Sedan, English sympathy had veered round in favour of France. The cartoon had to be drawn in a hurry, and no photograph of the Marquis could be procured in time, " so," wrote Shirley, " Tenniel had to manage."

† I well remember my father making this joke and thinking he was its sole inventor.—G. S. L.



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

sorts of things, his mother that he had been hurt at football, I that there was 'something disagreeable at the College.' I was right—in about an hour came a telegram from Dr. Schmitz, to say that R. had been expelled for rebellion. We had really scarcely read it when R. arrived, pale and tired—he had spent his money on the telegram, and never thought of taking a cab. He soon explained the Rebellion. It was a mere 'barring-out,' caused by the expulsion of a boy for presenting or rather writing a memorial. I was sure that R. had done nothing *very* wrong, and thought what was done deserved punishment. Sudden expulsion, on a Sunday, was arbitrary and unjust. Several others were sent off, some with long journeys. Unless all this is set right, I shall, as matter of duty, expose the affair, and work for the Doctor's removal. But resolved to sleep on it, and hear the Doctor himself. Hard work to get to sleep."

"*Nov. 7th.*

"Took notes of the whole history from Rego. The lads laid in provision for a siege, had patrols, etc. The war has turned all their heads."

"*Nov. 8th.*

"... Then the Doctor went into the story. I pointed out the boyish absurdities, and alluded to Rego's good character. Dr. S. spoke of him most highly, and declared that he loved and was proud of him, and that had he expressed any penitence, he would not have been sent home. I assured him that Rego saw his absurdity, and was sorry, and the Doctor said that if he wrote a letter of apology he might return. . . . Nothing could be kindlier or more friendly than the Doctor to me, and he reiterated expression of his regard for Rego. I adverted to my letter to Dr. W. S., saying that it was written under excitement, and that

## REGINALD IN TROUBLE

some words should have been seen only by the receiver, and Dr. L. S. said he thought nothing of words, in the circumstances—he himself had been miserable and sleepless. So we parted more pleasantly than I had expected. Saw Cecil and gave him 1s. To town with Torrens, and walked to Westminster Station, and so to Baker St. to make E. glad at my news. Now Rego's natural feeling is dislike to return unless others are pardoned. I believe all will be who make submission, but Rego has heard of new expulsions. These boys do not think how very needless it is to add to their parents' troubles. R. wrote a note of apology, and I posted it myself, to clench the nail."

"*Nov. 9th.*

"E. went off in the fog to Isleworth, wishing to smooth matters for R.'s reception. She thinks I have been 'stern' in the affair, but I have not felt so, nor has R. had a hard word from me—we have laughed as usual—indeed, I may not have said enough. He and perhaps his mother will feel some day that a damaging thing was near, and has been escaped, but it is painful to be misinterpreted by those whom one loves better than all else. However, had some little explanation, and all is well. E. saw Core, the Doctor away. Core says no one else has been pardoned, yet. He expressed himself most kindly, and promised to make things as smooth as he could for R., but was strong for his instant return, and at night R. had an excellent letter from him—warning him against being made to think himself a hero. Good tact—this is the opposite to R.'s idea. Gave R. 10s., not so much as a tip as to make him feel we were on good terms."

"*Nov. 11th.*

"Tenniel, who sat till 12, and advised an infusion of new art into *Punch*—we wanted a man who could draw

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

friendship, and 6 to Miss Garrett, as a duty. . . . Both elected.

Miss Garrett headed poll	..	47,858
Huxley .. ..	..	13,494
Dixon .. ..	..	9,031

and 4 others, Thorold, Angus, Hutchins (Papist), Watson."\*

Miss Matthews had made him a pair of slippers.

### S. B. TO MISS MATTHEWS.

" 6 KENT TERRACE,  
" REGENT'S PARK,  
" N.W.  
" 7th Nov., 1870.

" " How beautiful are " my " feet with shoes ' is the text from Solomon which you will set me quoting, my dear Miss Matthews, for many a morning and evening to come. Slippers, indeed ! they are much handsomer than those in which the casual-minded party in the ' Pilgrim's Progress ' likes to see Religion walk abroad. I might hunt the slipper all over London, and not run down anything so charming. I feel like a he-Cinderella. I wish I could write you as pretty a poem of thanks as Cowper did to the lady who worked him a patch-quilt:—

" " And thanks to one above them all  
The gentle fair of Purtenhall,  
*Who put the whole together.*'

But take my thanks in plain prose, and believe that I am a great deal too much pleased with your kind present to say pretty things about it.

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\* For the first School Board of London under Forster's Education Act. W. Hepworth Dixon, later editor of the *Athenæum*, whom Shirley had treated so roughly over the Shakespeare Memorial, was now on very friendly terms, and remained so till the end of Shirley's life. " Miss Garrett " is, of course, the well-known Dr. Elizabeth Garrett Anderson.

## “GOODY GRANVILLE”

“To-day’s *Times*? But if, as I hope, you are a constant reader of another journal, not unknown at No. LV, Parliament Street,\* you would not have (here’s bad English) supposed the Germans were going to give up any of their advantages.† Goody Granville wrote pretty pretty, but ‘Holy Willy’s Prayer’ will be said in Nôtre Dame for all that. As to putting off the wedding—you had *better* suggest that to the bride. Because (though she is full of merits) I should say she might think that a bird in the hand is better than two which are very likely *not* in the bush. (If a lady put *me* off, merely because a few hundred thousands of men were stabbing and shooting and slashing one another, she would have to go and look in the bush, anyhow, for another bird.) Besides, her learned husband would tell her that Hymen was nephew to Mars, so that it is all a family business. May they be happy—were I proposing the health at breakfast I should hope that he would find in her, and she in him, ‘greater riches than the treasures in Egypt,’ which is not saying much, so far as I saw. You may give this hint to your papa, if you like, as I conclude he will have to make a speech.

“Mr. Hardman‡ will probably be made Mayor of Kingston on Wednesday—(so he will be ‘mayoried’ too, as your friend Ernest would say), at least so says the *Comet*. He *has* been elected on the Council. I cannot imagine a greater bore, but I will console him with all the chaff I can think of.

“Always yours faithfully,  
“SHIRLEY BROOKS.”

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\* Messrs. Grindlay & Co., the proprietors of *Home News*, which Shirley still edited.

† Paris was now in a state of siege.

‡ (Sir) William Hardman.

SHIRLEY BROOKS

S. B. TO MISS MATTHEWS.

" 6 KENT TERRACE,  
" REGENT'S PARK,  
" N.W.

23rd Nov., 1870.

" MY DEAR MISS MATTHEWS,

" You will, I dare say, have received a *Musical World*, at least I wrote to the publisher to send it. The reason why you receive it you will discover by turning to a page on which you will see a wonderful poem by a friend of yours. Furthermore, you are respectfully requested to admire the same as much as you conveniently can, or to say you admire.

" Nextly, in a day or two I hope that you will receive Mr. *Punch's* 'Pocket-Book,' which it has given me a deal of trouble to edit *this* year, but I think it is about as good as the average. For a wonderful drama called 'R.A.,' and a thing called 'The Skeleton in the Mirror,' and a lovely poem about a Brighton Butterfly, you will have no difficulty in finding an author. I am now much 'exercised' over the Almanac, but we have, I think, got some good notions for pictures. I have another literary idea, on which I shall like to have your judgment when you have seen a specimen—'more anon.'

" That was a most unconstitutional thunderstorm last night. This is November. There was a new moon, who heralded herself with all the row. I didn't think it ladylike, but everything is odd in these times.

" You read *THE Times*, I know. That is a curious leading article to-day, written *at* the Germans. See also Russell's letter.\* They'll 'invite' him to leave Head Quarters at Versailles, and forego the delightful

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\* (Sir) W. H. Russell, the celebrated *Times* War Correspondent.

## LOIRE RHYMES WITH DESTROYER

view of the Crown Prince's—how shall I put it—*inferior* garments (whereof he hath said so much, enough to delight Poole) unless he 'mends his line and sins no more.' *Mais*, I do not give up a fixed idea very hastily, and I don't believe that the army of the Loire is going to do wonders. By the way, did you ever know the poetry of the Rev. Henry Stebbing\*—a pleasing parson? It was not bad. Two lines cling in my mind—have clung for 25 years because of a rhyme—the poem was about Jeanne d'Arc—

“ And along the banks of Loire  
Rides no more the armed *destroyer*.”

One can defend it, but one's rhymes, like one's good name, should need no defence. However, it has been held that tobacco rhymes to Long Acre.

“ I suppose you ask with some indignation why I write you a long note about nothing. Well, if it is a conundrum, I give it up, but I suppose the solution is because I never see you, to talk about nothing.

“ The Xmas picture in the *Illustrated News*† is pretty—a little, blue-eyed, fair-haired girl, with no stockings, lying on a bank and looking at a lady-bird on her hand. If the engravers and colourists do it justice, it ought to be a success. By the way, I was not to mention the subject, Evans knows why, but you *are* discretion.

“ Lastly, I am, as ever,

“ Yours most faithfully,  
“ SHIRLEY BROOKS.”

“ Dec. 1st.

“ A foolish paragraph about me, and illness, in the *London Figaro*, a slop-pail journal of gossip.”

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\* First editor of the *Athenæum*.

† To which he was writing some verses.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

" Dec. 17th.

" Work as usual, and looked over the way at my new room—carpet down—Fred asking me as to furniture. Cleared my papers from my den at 11,\* and as I supposed I was taking leave of that house, I 'dedicated' a few thoughts of advantages which have come to me there, and I hope felt earnestly thankful for all. The old house has a history for me."

" Dec. 24th.

" Into town, and took possession of my new room, No. 10 Bouverie St. B. & E. are anxious to make me comfortable, and I think the room will be so. Capital fire. W. H. B. installed me, and later my health was drunk at the usual gathering of the heads of departments. Were I well, I would have made a little ceremony, but my foot demands rest."

" Dec. 31st.

" Bought a diary for the new year. May it contain few such sad records as this volume. D. in 'Shakespeare' with Fred and Charles Dickens (jun.). Each of them had lost a father this year, and I one friend whom I loved almost as a father." †

This he follows with a list of those "gone *ad majores*."

" Feb. Mrs. Matthews, Wimpole St.  
James Helbling—heard of, he d. Xmas Eve,  
'69.  
George Hogarth, Dickens's father-in-law.  
Mrs. du Maurier, senior.  
John Murray's son, Arthur.  
March. William Brough.  
Mary Albert Smith.

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\* Clement's Inn.

† Mark Lemon.

“GONE ‘AD MAJORES’”

- April.* Mrs. Burnand.  
Lord Tenterden.  
Daniel Maclise.
- May.* Mark Lemon.
- June.* Charles Dickens.  
Harry Weber, drowned, boys' schoolfellow.  
F. M. Evans.  
Basil Piffard (a relative on his mother's side).
- July.* Mrs. Faed.  
Geo. Hodder.
- Sept.* Kit Pemberton.\*  
Cowper Coles.†  
Charley Synge.
- Nov.* Adolf Ferrari.
- Dec.* Lady Beaumont.  
F. Emanuel, boys' schoolfellow.  
Eleanor Beaumont.  
C. Hicks.

And N.Y. Day, 1871, dear A. Munro.”

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\* Said to be the original of many of Ouida's heroes

† Designer of the *Captain*, in which ship he went down off Cape Finisterre.



## CHAPTER XVIII

1871—Mrs. Lynn Linton's Contribution to *Punch*—Letters to Miss Matthews and W. Hepworth Dixon—The Germans Enter Paris—Mrs. Lemon's Pension—The Census—Private View of the Royal Academy—Letters to Percival Leigh—The Tichborne Case—A Large Evening Party at 6 Kent Terrace—George Biddell Airy—A *Punch* Dinner at 10 Bouverie Street—Walter Scott Centenary—Harrogate—Letters to Percival Leigh, W. H. Bradbury, du Maurier, Mrs. F. Romer, and Mrs. Hardman—Serious Illness of the Prince of Wales—" *Bombastes Furioso*."



ANY are the interesting personages with whom we find ourselves rubbing shoulders in the 1871 diary, as in its predecessors. Here are some of those which are casually mentioned. More will appear in the longer excerpts :—

The Lelands : [" Leland the American who writes the capital German-English poems ; Mrs. Leland very agreeable and almost pretty—very strong American accent "]; Sir George Scharf ; E. M. Ward, R.A. : [" sends me a proof of the engraving of his ' Marie Antoinette Hearing her Sentence ' "]; George Bentley ; Sketchley : [" very amusing if he would not make noises when he has no fun to emit "]; Serjeant

## PEOPLE OF IMPORTANCE

Parry ; Ouida : [“ had thought of going to Ouida’s at the Langham, but did not feel i’ the vein for vanity ”]; Sir G. Beaumont ; the Heather-Biggs ; Monsignor Capel : [“ the ‘ Catesby ’ of ‘ Lothair,’ he is delightful, quite the Jesuit type, and full of information ; I like him ”]; Richard Garnett ; Solomon Hart ; the Jessels ; R. Lehmann ; Rignold ; Gustave Doré : [“ sat with him an hour and smoked. He is a man of artistic genius, but I did not much admire him. I fancy that he is spoiled ”]; the Lankesters ; Frederick Greenwood ; Dr. Doran ; Lord Shaftesbury : [“ had talk with him and was much pleased with the gentleness of his manner. I am very glad to have met so good a man ”]; John Holker ; Mrs. and Miss Bella Bateman : [“ who has grown very handsome ”]; Pope : [“ a big pleasant-faced barrister, who was so jolly through dinner that no one would have thought he was in torture with a boil ”]; G. H. Lewes ; George Eliot : [“ they had quite a little *levée*, affectation of not talking about her works ”]; J. Toole : [“ his imitations most excellent ”]; Dan. O’Connell : [“ I like Dan and his wife ”]; Clement Scott : [“ writes to ask me to be on a Committee for showing some courtesy to the French actors ”]; the Jerrolds ; Sir Biddell Airy : [“ proposed my health, an honour from *him* ”].

Almost the first entry in the diary of this year is of peculiar interest to me, as the biographer of my dear friend, Mrs. Lynn Linton. Turning to the (I fear) long-forgotten pages of her biography, I find that the article to which Shirley refers appeared on Jan. 7th, and was entitled “ On being Taken Up and Put Down Again.” It was signed “ A Dog who has had his Day,” and was Mrs. Linton’s first and last appearance in *Punch*.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

“ *Jan. 2nd.*

“ Wrote Mrs. Linton with her article in next *Punch*. She is ill, but replied in ecstasy that I was a prince, and she hoped to add a laurel to my coronet.”

“ *Jan. 9th.*

“ Heard to-day of two deaths, one of George Stacy, who has been the *Punch* printer for years, and who soon followed M. L. A loyal and valuable man. Wrote to his daughter, who informed me he died yesterday. And at night, reading the *Pall Mall G.*, learned that, on New Year's Day, dear Alexander Munro had been released from his sufferings. I could not hope to see him again, after what I saw on June 30th. As kind and good a man as I have known.”

“ *Jan. 10th.*

“ Manby told us that at the last coronation, he was in attendance on Soult,\* and, asking leave to go and see Mrs. M., Soult gave him leave, adding, ‘ You like your wife better than I do mine.’ She had been a *vivandière* or thereabouts, and talked accordingly.”

“ *Jan. 11th.*

“ Old Paul Bedford d. 82. He belongs to other times. I said in the *Era* :—

“ ‘ His name has a significance for those who have ceased to be “ easily moved to mirth.” *Labuntur anni.*’

“ He, however, never moved me to mirth at all ; he was a mere buffoon, but in association with Wright, † a real artist, he gained a reputation for comicality. Last time I saw him was, I think, at Whitefriars (when B. & E. were printing his absurd book), and he told scandals of Webster and others.”

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\* Marshal Soult was ambassador to England in 1838.

† Edward Richard Wright.

“ HE PRAYS TO GOD—THAT IS MOST ”

“ Jan. 18th.

“ Walked to Bedford. *Punch* d. W. B. away. Got out a ‘Baptism of Fire’ cut, Paris. King of Prussia proclaimed Emperor of Germany—that is much, but in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles, while Paris is locked up in his iron circle, and bombarded by his guns—that is more. And he prays to God—that is most.”

The following letters show that, busy as he was, the Editor of *Punch* could still concern himself about matters which a smaller man might have considered beneath his notice.

S. B. TO MISS MATTHEWS.

“ Jan. 19th, '71.

“ MY DEAR MISS MATTHEWS,

“ A tender mission has been confided to me. ‘Cato’s a proper person to entrust a love tale with’—but there is also a rat’s tale in it.

“ Cecil’s chief pet, this last term and holiday, has been a *white Rat with Red Eyes*. It is harmless, if not affable. Eats oats, and a little bread and milk.

“ He has left it in my charge, and wishes me humbly to offer it to Ethel, who, if she does not pet it, will cause it to be treated kindly. I do not know whether your town arrangements include a menagerie, but at the College, of course, the creature could find a corner. I know he (I meant by ‘he,’ Cecil, but the pronoun suits the rat also) will be very much rejoiced if you allow Ethel to accept it, and I write to ask whether you can. Needless to say, please say ‘No,’ *sans* phrase, if you think the beast is likely to be any sort of bore. He never squeaks, I believe.

“ Mrs. Brooks is just off with them, one for

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

Manchester, the other for Isleworth, and ' my house is left unto me desolate.'

" Ever yours faithfully,

" SHIRLEY BROOKS.

" P.S.—If you accept, I will leave him at your door on my way to town on Saturday.

" Miss Matthews."

S. B. TO MISS MATTHEWS.

" 6 KENT TERRACE,

" REGENT'S PARK,

" N.W.

" 20th Jan., 1871.

(Saturn in Aphelion.)

" MY DEAR MISS MATTHEWS,

" Thank you in my own name and my *chylid's* (as they say on the stage) for letting Ethel adopt the rodent. I leave him, herewith, as I am going to dine at 35 in your street.

" I am quite ashamed of his house, but Cecil made it himself, taking a Sunday afternoon for the purpose. I hope my neighbours' devotions were not disturbed, but as one is a lawyer and the other a successful tradesman, there is reason to hope for the worst.

" *Confidential.*

" My belief is that the rat can *get out*, through the loose wires, for which reason it is well to keep the 'bit of a desk' over them. But Cecil says that he never *wants* to come out. However, I give the caution. He used to be in Cecil's bedroom at night. If he be not similarly treated by Ethel, it may be well to tell the servants to keep the said flap on, or—

" His food is oats, of which I send some, and every day some bread and milk mixed. He does not drink, I am told. I do.

## CAPITULATION OF PARIS

“ I daresay that if Ethel puts on the coax-screw in the right quarter—I fancy uncle may be amenable thereto—she may get him a better abode if she takes to him. But this is an impertinent hint—only, I think he’ll escape if no such measure is taken. I *should have seen to this myself*, but to-day I am not able to get into the right quarters, and do not like to delay delivering over my charge.

“ I’ll only add that though he is, as I said, affable, he has a playful way of biting at a finger—I advise trying with a pencil or paper-knife, and you will see what I mean.

“ Reginald writes very cheerfully from Manchester—he says they have ice there, but he has a snug warm home.

“ Kindest regards to your papa and all,

“ Ever yours faithfully,

“ IMPRANSUS,

as Dr. Johnson signed, but I believe I am *going* to dine exceeding well.”

“ *Jan. 25th.* [Diary.]

“ *Capitulation of Paris.*”

“ Such were the words that met my eye as I opened the *Times* in the drawing-room this morning. Jules Favre was stated to be yesterday at Versailles, negotiating, but asking inadmissible terms. Bismarck was also stated to have obtained from the Empress Eugénie, with L. Napoleon’s leave, assent to the German demands. Neither *Standard* nor *Telegraph* had aught of this great news, though the latter wrote that the end was coming. I take it that the *Times’s* good services to Prussia have been rewarded, as in the Secret Treaty case, with early information. This is the most important news I have ever had to note, and I suppose will not be paralleled in my time.”

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

" *Jan. 29th.*

" What is noted below is the most curious evidence of the reality of the siege of Paris. The writer fixes on this Saturday, but the same sort of advertisements appeared long before, and after that day. French folk will keep them.

" The first and second pages of the *Times* presented a curious spectacle on Saturday. They contained seven columns of advertisements—about 400 separate messages, addressed by French emigrants to their friends in Paris. Many of these were inscribed to Mr. Washburne, the United States Minister, who has been allowed to receive the *Times* during the siege, and who seems to have kindly undertaken to convey to persons shut up in the capital any information which reaches him from their families and friends abroad."

S. B. TO WILLIAM HEPWORTH DIXON.

" 6 KENT TERRACE,

" REGENT'S PARK,

" N.W.

" *5th Feb., 1871.*

" MY DEAR HEPWORTH,

" Very many thanks for the books, which will comfort me for several evenings—just the reading (and *just the print*) for the hour of quiet and the groggeries, *non sine fumo*. When did we begin to correspond? I am afraid to think. Angus Reach's burlesque cropping up again after so many years (I attended his rehearsals with him) made me feel that Methuselah was a brat.

" I trust you voted for a chaplain for the Education Board—do you think I would have gone all that way (quite across our street) to give a vote for you, if I had thought you weren't pious, like King William? I was

## LONDON SCHOOL BOARD

curious to see what Lord L.\* would do—he is, I believe, out and out Calvinistical—but he has been saved the necessity of proclaiming. By the way, in ‘ Bartholomew Fair ’ is *such* a good speech for a Calvinist (it’s in the scene of ‘ humour ’), ‘ Sir, he may neither laugh nor hope in this company.’ I meant to put it in my imitation Walpole, but it’s a little too near the wind—if we use a text, even out of Job, we get a volley of excommunications.

“ A serious word. My wife gave me the saddest account of the health of your son when she last visited you. This is some time back, and we earnestly hope that all has materially altered for the better. It is hard enough (I tried last year) to be prostrated when life is a good deal behind you, but when it is nearly all before you, it is indeed distressing. Mrs. Brooks bids me say to Mrs. Dixon that we have had illness, and with that and the weather she has been almost shut up, or would have been over to your house long ago.

“ With our united and kindest regards to you both,

“ Ever yours sincerely,

“ SHIRLEY BROOKS.

“ Hepworth Dixon, Esq., L.S.B. (is that right ?) ”

“ Feb. 1st.

“ P. D. We knocked out a Peace cut.† Kiki very silent and looks ill, is sad about his eyes, poor dear fellow.” ‡

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\* Lord Lawrence, first Chairman of the London School Board.

† This was a plea for peace for the sake of the starving women and children in Paris. The Treaty of Peace was not signed till May 18th.

‡ And yet du Maurier heroically went on drawing to the delight of the world for a quarter-of-a-century longer.



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

" Feb. 4th.

" Burnand—he had a new piece at the Adelphi to-night—we and Fred had boxes, but it turned out that the managers, with their usual discourteousness, had let all, after giving out cards to us. However, Burnand gave up his own box to us 4. Managers are beasts, some of 'em. Vestris *never* let a given box. Heard that poor Robertson, the dramatist, died yesterday. The last years of his life have been easy, with money, a young and devoted wife, and rich friends, but I heard that in other days he suffered actual privation from poverty, and that his first wife's death was hastened by want. He may be forgiven for all bitterness and cynicism.\* D. with Fred in 'Shakespeare.'"

" Feb. 6th.

" Just now am re-reading De Foe's novels, 'Roxana' and 'Moll Flanders.' Call that old humbug a moralist! He delights in 'warmth.' I wonder whether the Dissenting folk who recently put up a monument to him ever read 'Roxana.' 'But then he preaches against the crimes he depicts so carefully.' To be sure, that makes a difference. 'A prayer to save the stamp,' by Swift, was much honester."

" Feb. 9th.

" The Session begins to-day, and the 'Essence' to-morrow. This work is a bore usually, but it is a feature in *Punch*, so a duty."

" Feb. 13th.

" Curious coincidence, of which spiritualists would make something. Passing the jeweller's on our Park

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\* The successful author of "Caste" told Mr. Frith that he had often had nothing for dinner but his pipe!

## A COINCIDENCE

Terrace, I stopped to look at some signet rings. They put into my head a ring Albert Smith gave me, with a 'Punch' on it. I had not seen it for ages, but I knew E. had it. While we were sitting in the twilight before dinner, E. said, 'I had a fancy, this afternoon, to turn out old jewellery and things, and I found the ring A. S. gave you—here it is.' Odder—she must have found it about the time I was thinking of it, 4 o'clock. Palgrave Simpson has an odd belief about such coincidences."

" Feb. 14th.

" The German triumphant entry into Paris is resolved on, as I dare say it has been from the first. Well, Napoleon entered Berlin in triumph in 1806—it is a Return Call. If it had been omitted, the French (who are already returning to indecent plays and blasphemy) would say that the 'barbarians' had been awed away. I wonder whether any fanatic will try at assassination. The houses on the line are to be occupied, but a bold man might 'do and die.' "

S. B. TO MISS MATTHEWS.

" 6 KENT TERRACE,

" REGENT'S PARK,

" N.W.

" *Dies Cinerum*, 1871. (*Feb. 22nd.*)

" MY DEAR MISS MATTHEWS,

" If this were not Ash Wednesday, I should ask you whether the enclosed tickets for to-morrow were acceptable. If you do not care about using them, perhaps you can give them away. Do not trouble to return them.

" If this were not Ash Wednesday, when every kind

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

of penance is desirable, I would hope that your papa is rapidly recovering from the results of vaccination.

"If this were not Ash Wednesday, when all amusement should be forgotten, I should ask how you like the play of 'Revenge,' recently writ by a member of your family. The late Coleridge has one with the same title, I think.

"Resolved that you, for one, shall do penance, I write this with a steel pen, and I hope that you have not got a magnifying glass. That would be evading the penance, like the man that boiled the peas he was ordered to put into his shoes.

"I went to the Zoological Gardens yesterday, and, seeing the old keeper near the Lions, I asked how they had got on through the winter. 'Thank you, Sir,' he said, as if he were speaking of his family, 'we did pretty well, but the bad weather was against us.'

"The primitive Christians did not begin Lent until the first Sunday therein. Pope Felix III, 487, stuck on these four days, to bring the fasting days up to 40. Gregory the Great introduced the sprinkling of ashes—hence *dies cinerum*. Believe this if you like, anyhow believe me,

"Yours ever faithfully,

"CHARLES WILLIAM SHIRLEY BROOKS

"(*Citizen and Goldsmith*)."

"Feb. 26th.

"Read 'A Perfect Treasure,' a one vol. story, smartly written—somewhat in imitation of Wilkie Collins—but the absurdity is that a Hindu swallows a diamond, and keeps it in him—where?—for years, so that his master is always anxious to have him with him, and a doctor gets at the stone after the man has been drowned."

## “ VÆ VICTIS ”

“ *March 1st.*

“ Much trouble over cut, as it was a big day and a big event, but we got at a ‘ *Væ Victis!* ’ ”\*

“ *March 3rd.*

“ As I, to my shame, had not visited the collection of Old Masters, at Burlington House, E. and I took hansom and went thither. I have seen no such collection, and I grieve that I have neglected to go sooner and often and study a little, for though I am no artist, many of the pictures are to me above art, if I may use the words. I mean that independently of their wonderful merit, which for the most part I take on trust, they impress me either by sheer power, or by their suggestiveness. I did not see half, I did not well see ten, but I came away with a brain full of sensations.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“ The German occupation was brief. I am glad that they went in, for the Parisians would have sworn, and written, that Paris was never taken, else. As it is, they will swear and write that the Germans were afraid to stay.”

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\* On this day thirty thousand of the victorious Germans had marched into Paris and occupied it for forty-eight hours. But, in the moment of triumph, *Punch* did not hesitate to remind the German Emperor,

“ How, sixty-five years since, there came  
A mightier Emperor than thou  
Upon Berlin to put the shame  
Which thy hand puts on Paris now.”

And to warn him that time might again have its revenges—

“ Who smite with sword with sword shall fall.”

\* \* \* \* \*

God’s mill grinds slow, but they grind small,  
And He that grinds gives all their due.”

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

" *March 4th.*

" Bought a hat, which is a thing to inscribe, for I have been wearing one of much seediness, for it was that on which Fred came down when we rapidly descended from the coach, just by Tunbridge on 7th July, '69."

" *March 11th.*

" All needful signatures to Mrs. M. Lemon's ' Memorial ' have been got, so to-day I wrote to Mr. Gladstone a letter to go in with it, in which I stated that Dickens had suggested it, and would have taken charge of it, but for his death. A short letter, ending with the remark that I should have felt that I had neglected a duty to the dead and to the living, if I had not made the above statement. The names of the signatories are good ones, and representative. I copy them :—

John Everett Millais (R.A.)	Houghton
Wm. H. Smith (M.P.)	Roundell Palmer (Sir)
Anthony Trollope	Thos. Milner Gibson
Wm. Longman	Wilkie Collins
John Murray	Tom Taylor
W. P. Frith (R.A.)	John Tenniel
Derby	Shirley Brooks
S. Winton (Wilberforce)	A. Tennyson

One bishop, 2 lords, 1 ex-minister, 2 M.P.'s, 3 artists, 1 poet, 4 authors, 2 publishers—16."\*

" *March 15th.*

" Wrote ' Polite Conversation,' modern, for *Punch*—a companion column to some excerpts from Swift.

\* \* \* \*

" ' Bedford.' Gave Mrs. Warner an old print of Dryden, to be put into *the* ' Dryden,' where we dine. We

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\* As a result, a pension of £100 from the Civil List was granted to Mrs. Lemon. In addition to this a sum of £1,500 was raised by the Proprietors and the Staff of *Punch* and other friends.

## PRINCESS LOUISE

elicited a good Marriage (P. Louise) cut.\* Kiki away, but sent a most clever note about the Ascidians from whom Darwin deduces us."

"E. had Mrs. Y. here, and they went to the Royalty, to see a piece, 'Behind a Mask,' by a so-called Bernard Dixon, who is Labouchere, 'the besieged Resident.'" †

"March 17th.

"Work as usual. Have I set down that *Punch* has been expelled by the Dover Christian Young Men, with their Mayor, Knocker, at their head? One point of abuse was a cut which I myself invented for C. Keene. The papers have been so down on the idiots that little was left for me to say, but I have managed to say something." ‡

"March 20th.

"The news from Paris. I hope that the Germans

---

\* "Over the Fence," representing the Princess being lifted by the present Duke of Argyll out of the enclosure which hedges Royal ladies from other than Royal lovers:—

"Then boldly leap, Louise: and lusty Lorne  
Show how a dear load may be lightly borne,  
Though weighted with a princely coronet—  
He that would win the rose must bear the thorn!  
Envy's the winner's debt—  
Blithely this flow'ret set  
Beside thy eagle plume and wear it long."

† "Diary of the Besieged Resident in Paris," published anonymously, by Mr. Henry Labouchere.

‡ *Vide* "Dolts of Dover," *Punch*, March 25th, p. 126. The cause of offence was the illustration of an old lady imparting to a sympathising friend the fact that, although she permitted Jemima, the cook, to go to chapel three times a day, she discharged her duties none the better for it. This, argued one of the dolts, constituted a sneer at Religion!

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

will go back and stamp out the red disease.\* But I won't write much about it here; I shall have to do such acres elsewhere.

\* \* \* \*

“ Emperor Napoleon landed at Dover! When he came last I wrote words to a picture-book of Colnaghi's describing the state visits from 16th April, 1855, to 21st. I was at the Opera to see them, on the 19th, in Arcedekné's box, and saw L. N. and the Empress, Queen and P. Albert. ‘ Where is dat Barty now ? ’ ” †

“ *March 22nd.*

“ A joke in *Punch* about the Eton boys having another week's holiday because the Q[ueen] has been vaccinated, in *Times*. It was sent me, and the paper is marked ‘ Winton House, Winchester. ’ I had a fancy this was episcopal, but that does not seem to be the name of the residence—I now fancy I was mistaken. Anyhow, the joke is good. Wrote two leaders, Marriage of Princess, and on France, for *I.L.N.*, and most of Australian *H.N.* Made an ‘ epigram ’ for *Punch*.”

“ *March 31st.*

“ Was in my room aloft when E. called up ‘ I've got something to show you. ’ Went down, and found her at her bedroom door, holding—as in old days—a baby! A brown, black-haired sort of thing, a month old, the offspring of our milkwoman. How E. likes these things. I almost, but certainly not quite, wish she had one of her own. She has just come in as I am writing, but I have not read this to her.”

“ *April 1st.*

“ At the Garrick, Merewether, Q.C., told me I had

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\* The insurrection in Paris.

† Shirley was no lover of Louis Napoleon, and quoted with gusto from an otherwise foolish French pamphlet of the time, “ *C'était un Sphinx qui n'avait pas d'énigme.* ”

## THE CENSUS (1871)

just been re-elected on the Committee. This was an entire surprise, but he came to me again, saying that I made him doubt my identity, but that the name *was* that of the Right Honourable S. B. I had no idea of the matter—wait and hear.”

“ *April 2nd.*

“ Filled up my Census paper—the united ages of the house (as given) 148—4 of us. I stick a copy at the end of this book. Shall I fill up another, I wonder ? If my *health* lasts, I hope so for the sake of one who is in this return, and two who are not.”\*

The following is the copy referred to :—

“ *The Census. 1871.*

“ My Return (6 Kent Terrace, Regent’s Park).

“ S. B. Head. Married. M. 55 (Editor of *Punch*,  
Middlesex, London.  
(Novelist.)

“ E. B. Wife. Married. F. 39. Editor’s wife,  
Trinidad, British subject.

“ Betsy Alderman. Servant. U.M. F. 30. Cook.  
Lincolnshire, Crowland.

“ Emma Hawes. Servant. U.M. F. 24. Housemaid.  
Buckinghamshire, Woburn Chequers.

(“ So we were the 4 in 3,251,804.”)

“ *April 11th.*

“ A friend of Tenniel’s, a scholar and a gent., objects to the ‘Polite Conversation’ in *Punch*, and to a picture in which a kiss is mentioned. J. T. must change his friend, unless the former wants donkey-riding. Wrote him a ‘fudge’ letter, to show, if he likes. (N.B.—It turned out that the censor was not a donkey at all, except *pro hac vice*, being the Rev. Mr. Dodgson, author of ‘Alice’s Adventures in Fairy—no,

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\* His wife and his boys.



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

Wonderland,' a delightful book. But he is simple in this matter.)”

S. B. TO MISS MATTHEWS.

“ *April 14th, 1871.*

“ . . . We went to see ‘Joan of Arc.’ I could only really *see* it, for I was deaf with a cold. It is splendidly got up, but I fancy the verdict is right, that T. Taylor has rather given scenes in Joan’s life than a play; moreover Mrs. Rousby is not robust enough for the fighting peasant girl. There is an idiotic outcry against the scene in which she is burned. It is real enough certainly, but I see no objection to the business in a drama of the kind, though I hate that class of drama. Shall we never have poetry in tragedy or wit in comedy again ?

“ I dined in Curzon Street last night and met among others the Editor of *Notes and Queries*; he had some good stories, so had others, but they are too long to tell in ink. He is an official in the House of Lords. The present Lord Abinger was making a speech, of course a foolish one, when the late Duke of Wellington, then *utterly* deaf, put up his hand to his mouth, and as he thought *whispered* to his neighbour, ‘Clear that Talent is not Hereditary!’—only the whisper might have been heard at Brighton—and Abinger ‘shut up.’ Charles Kemble whispered to me in the same way once at the Club, ‘I don’t want to hurt those gentlemen’s feelings, but between you and me I should like to see their friend flogged at the cart’s tail.’ ”

“ *April 17th.*

“ After d., E. and Rego went to the opera, his first visit to it. I tied his cravat, and lent him my dress coat as he does not yet ‘come tails.’ Opera, ‘Faust,’ Covent Garden, a very good work for a first impression.

## MRS. LYNN LINTON

first opera was at Drury Lane, the 'Gazza Ladra,'\* Grisi, Lablache, Tamburini, and, I think, Ivanoff."

*ii 23rd.*

A sort of 'Out,' *i.e.*, we fulfilled our promise to go see Mrs. Linton, at Loughton. It was a business, owing to the complication of railways, otherwise it was very pleasant. Cab to Chalk Farm—rail to Victoria, and then to Loughton, by Highbury, Barnsbury, and my other youthful acquaintances. At the Park a great scramble over bridges, to get on to the platform. Then thank Shalford, anyhow another change, but finally to Loughton, where Mrs. L. waited us. Waggonette for a long drive through Epping Forest, where I believe she has taken about 45 years ago, from the 'Old House.' Mrs. L.'s, she lodging in a farmhouse, very clean. Arrived at 6, there coming Mrs. Allen, wife of the sec. to Trinity House, a charming person. Ramble with her while I smoked: thought we heard the nightingale. Had to leave at 8—and then to station, change to Shalford, and at Dalston, and at V. Park, but reached Chalk Farm at last, and had cab home. But these are details—the visit was a very agreeable one, and she was so glad to see us that we were quite repaid the trouble. Only I shouldn't live at Loughton, if I wanted to see Mrs. L. so much."

*ii 25th.*

Had official information that I had once more been elected on the Committee of the 'Garrick.'"

*ii 26th.*

Corrected 'N. in P.' and went to the Royal Academy. They give the Press a day, before the exhibition is opened to private view. It was not a cheerful scene—

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*La Gazza Ladra,*" by Rossini.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

Penders	Mrs. Arthur Lewis
O'Neil	Herbert (R.A.) saw
Amy Phillip	John Parry
V. Prinsep	Hon. Mrs. Norton, E. saw
P. Simpson	Marks
Planchè	Ward, E. M.'s
Gye	Thompson and Lady T.
Webster (R.A.)	Fergusson, Misses
Lehmann	W. Agnew
G. Phillips	T. and Mrs. Agnew
John Gilbert	Trollope
Calderons	Alma Tadema, saw, with his
Ben Webster, showed him	fiancée
M. L.'s bust, which he	Lord Russell, saw
liked	Misses Skellett
Durham	Sir W. Boxall
Mrs. E. Coleman	Jenny Lind, E. saw
Tredcroft	Saunders (?)
Mrs. C. Matthews	Mrs. Poynter, saw
Rouget	

*" April 29th. (In red ink.)*

*" My birthday. I have much to be thankful for, and I trust that I am so. Heard from Rego, who had remembered the day, and sent me a clever imitation of the first Ode of Horace. For one who can do this, and who *thinks* to do it, I need have no great fear, whether I live to help him, or do not. D.G.*

*(In black ink. )*

*" Talk with my wife. She says we have no troubles, except an occasional touch of our own tempers, and everything to be glad of, especially two good boys. Agreeing, so to bed. Have not spent a pleasanter birthday, in a quiet, worky, unexcited way, for many a year. D.G."*

A POINTLESS "PAR."

S. B. TO PERCIVAL LEIGH.

"6 KENT TERRACE,

"REGENT'S PARK,

"N.W.

"Sunday (May 7th, '71).

'MY DEAR PROFESSOR,

" 'Tis thought that you are an Obscurantist, and a Buddhist, and an Oystergoth, and several other bad things, but in composition you are usually as kind as your ruffianly Idol, Billy Gridiron. I thank heaven I am as stupid as any man who is no stupider than myself, but you have puzzled me. Will you explain to me the point of this 'par.'? I inserted it, not seeing, but sure I should see at night: *did* not, but was sure I should see in the morning: *do* not, and so I go to the *fons et origo*. I am going out a good deal, and I shall certainly be asked.

" ' *Diplomatic Revelation*.

" "A telegram from Berlin, announcing the reception here of Count Schouvaloff by Emperor William, says:

" "According to trustworthy information, the Count has repeatedly expressed himself highly satisfied with the result of his mission to England on the subject of Central Asia."

" "So far, then, we have no reason to conclude that he considers his mission to have resulted in a dead failure.' \*

" No, I *don't* see.

" Ever yours,

" S. B.

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\* Apparently no point was discovered, for the "par." did not appear.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

" P.S.—Claimant and Skipjack, or Skipwith, to be had up on Wednesday."\*

A little later Shirley was visiting the Dickens at Gadshill, leaving Leigh as his *locum tenens*.

S. B. TO PERCIVAL LEIGH.

" GADSHILL PLACE,  
" HIGHAM BY ROCHESTER,  
" KENT.  
" Friday.

" MY DEAR LEIGH,

" I send Brightmore the ' Essence ' by this post. It is beautifully *written*, and there ought to be no mistakes, only, if Sambourne's initials be not M. (it seldom is) please alter the beginning of the ' Essence.'

" I dare say B. will not be able to send proofs by post, but if not, let him send them by the North Kent Railway to Higham, by an early train, and also let proofs be sent to my house, as I shall be up on Sunday evening.

" Lovely weather, and yesterday we saw the grand siege operations described in to-day's paper.

" Ever yours,  
" S. B.

" [P.S.]—Is *damnari, damnato*, good Latin? I can't *think* out of town. Look to the very *little bits*, please, and if you see any very stupid ones write good ones instead, especially at the finish of the number. *Nothing* about the Tichborne case, please."

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\* The Tichborne (Civil) Case should have begun on the Wednesday, but there was no jury. It began on the Thursday (May 11th) and ended on March 2nd, 1872. Thereupon the claimant was lodged in Newgate to be tried for perjury.

## THE "WAGGAWOCK"

On the subject of "the Claimant" Mrs. Panton writes to me :—

"If you wanted to get a rise out of S. B. you had merely to mention the 'Claimant.' Then his trial was on, and we spent the 22nd at it; we had tenants at Poole and Swanage who swore the Claimant was Tichborne, but I heard him describe his house near Poole all wrong, and I remember delighting S. B. by telling him this by letter. He wrote after the verdict the parody on the Jabberwock in *Punch*. He used to 'snort,' literally 'snort,' when anything enraged him, and many a 'snort' did the Tichborne case cause him. He was rabid against him."

The parody was entitled "Waggawocky," and concluded :—

"And hast thou slain the Waggawock?  
Come to my arms, thou Beamish Boy!  
O Coleridge, J. !\* Hoorah, hooray!  
*Punch* chortled in his Joy."

"May 1st.

"'At opening of Crystal Palace' (meaning, of course, Great Exhibition) says my diary for this day 20 years. At opening of International Exhibition,† I write to-day, having just returned. Went in carriage with Torie and Jessie, but we parted near the doors, and E. and I having white tickets (I might have joined in the procession, but didn't wish, and had no court dress or uniform), got into the Conservatory, and, standing on chairs during the ceremony, saw very well, and heard the Prince of Wales declare the place 'open.'

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\* Sir John Coleridge, the Attorney-General, whose speech had lasted twenty-six days! The proceedings cost the Tichborne estate £92,000!

† At South Kensington.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

Then in an awful mob of swelldom, under the hot rays through the glass, and in a dead lock with Delpierre and a lot of other glittering diplomatists, some Oriental. Very badly managed by officialism. Then into the body of the Conservatory, and sat with E. Levy\* and his wife. At last we got away, not waiting for the concert, cab, and home by 2. I went simply and solely to please Emily, or I should not have been there. I hate crowds and ceremonials. However, 'tis done."

" May 4th.

" Work as usual.† Counted for E. the contents of a box in which she has been hoarding silver three-pences and fourpences, in order to buy Rego a new watch. £3 10s. 6d., a good advance, but I will make it up to what is wanted, if she have not saved it by his b.-d."

\* \* \* \*

" A new kitten, from Amy Evans, black, and supposed to be likely to be curly or fluffy. (This grew, and we got fond of it, but it d. June 7th, and we don't know why. Hawes, the housemaid, wished it could be 'analyzed.')

" May 5th.

" Usual, and a great deal for *Punch*. These days, which are described in 7 words, mean several hours of close writing, *de omnibus rebus et*, etc. They are the bread-winners. Mem. This week, I let some verses appear for the second time in *Punch*. Was inclined to blame Ancutt, but on enquiry found the MS. had

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\* Lord Burnham.

† Amongst it "Morals at the Academy," to which he signs himself "Winkelman Fuseli Dobbs," a method of treating the pictures which might well be repeated for the amusement of a later generation.



*By kind permission of the Proprietors of "Punch"*

**SHIRLEY BROOKS**

*From "Once a Week"*





## THE "FRENCH MONKEYS" & THE VENDÔME

gone in twice. I remembered them, of course, but supposed I had let them stand over. The accident had one good result, it established relations between me and a 'reader' in the office, Pincott, who wrote to ask that he might send me note of anything that occurred to him, as he had done for 16 years with M. L. Wrote him a proper note, and got 3 suggestions on the next Sunday. He may save some literal and other errors. *Punch* is a difficult paper to revise, as there is a change of attitude of thought with each article."

" *May 6th.*

" W. H. B. showed me the Banquet Hall, which proceeds slowly with its decorations."\*

" *May 8th.*

" Very hot, in fact oppressively close, so that one rejoiced to see the clouds gather blackly. About 3.30 down came as heavy rain as I have seen. Thunder and lightning. Wondered whether in Paris, instead of 'heaven's flashes' they were seeing 'man's,' for it was said that Bismarck had told Thiers that if he did not go in to-day, the Germans would. But wolf has been cried often. To-day the Vendôme column was to fall."

The column stood, as a matter of fact, till the 16th, when Shirley wrote :—

" The French monkeys pulled down the Vendôme column to-day about 5.30 p.m.,"

and inserted the *Daily News* telegram :—

" Suddenly there arose the cry of 'It falls!' and slowly the huge column bowed towards the Rue de la Paix. As it fell it broke into several pieces in the air,

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\* For description of the *Punch* dining-room *vide* Mr. M. H. Spielmann's "History of *Punch*," p. 60.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

falling in about four portions, on the bed of sand and dung. A loud, dull report followed, and clouds of dust arose.

"The crowds instantly dashed forward to pick up relics, crying '*Vive la Commune!*'"

"*May 11th.*

"Noises below, enter a new piano—borrowed. Curiously, F. Smith, builder, called, just as we have pulled down the doors of his conservatory. Having writ up to 5, I descend to surrender myself to the revel. Began by dining off roast beef with E. in the study. Cigars on the drawing-room sofa, in Cecil's carpenter's room. Coffee. Dress, and we were on duty by 9. At half-past 9 came Mrs. Sothern. Then they soon came pouring in, and by 11 we had 90 visitors. If all had come there would have been 47 more. No disappointments of much consequence, except Lady Thompson, Sala, and Wilkie Collins, all of whom, specially 'Kate,' I should have liked to see. Mrs. Cresswick Jackson led off with a song, Sir Julius Benedict played to Miss Philp, Cusins played beautifully. Du Maurier sang, so did Miss Fergusson. Brinley Richards played. Some good music, argal. Croker gave his capital imitations. Everybody talked loud and laughingly—I believe people enjoyed themselves. Rather a scramble at supper, which was a capital one, E. had done her best, and I made the champagne go. I took down Mrs. Rousby, who looked lovely—she was the star, in that respect. Soon after 12 some went, but not many. I got some supper, at last, taking down Mrs. Jones, Burnand's pretty sister-in-law. The last to linger were the Nelsons, Jerrolds, and Burnand. All gone by about 2.30. Cigars on E.'s sofa, in her room, while she undressed. Put out my light 3.20. The largest party we have had, and

## MONSIGNOR CAPEL

a very good one. 'An excellent piece of work, Madam wife, and I am awfully glad it is done,' to adapt the excellent Mr. Christopher Sly."

"May 13th.

"*Punch*. Cold day, east wind, Leigh wished me a merry Xmas—had a fire. How right Cowper was about May. Papers to Rego. Got through work by 5.30, dressed, and to Willis's rooms, Newspaper Press Dinner. Saw lots of people I knew—Boys, Lord Houghton, Thoms, James Matthews, Heather Bigg, Wigan, B. Jerrold, and many more. Excellently placed, as regarded neighbours, at end of table, on chairman's right

Arthur Helps

Beresford Hope. R. J. Phillimore. S. B. Monsnr. Capel.

This was capital, I wanted to know Capel, the 'Catesby' of 'Lothair.' He is delightful—quite the Jesuit type—and full of information, and I won't say\* ostentatious effort to be exactly *just* in his descriptions of folk. Anecdotes, but not new—but are new anecdotes possible? I take it that it is his business to become intimate with people. I like him. Said he thought it unwise in Doyle to leave *P.*† Much music, and several things played and sung in a batch, but between speeches, don't see the sense of this. All the ladies close to us. For the most part not radiant angels. I spoke about 10, and was short, but I believe

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\* It is curious to find Shirley, in this case apparently by a slip of the pen, saying, and refusing to say, in the same breath. Cf. the deliberate use of the same rhetorical figure in the *Man in the Moon* quoted on p. 54.

† "Dicky" Doyle was a devout Catholic and resented *Punch's* hostile attitude towards the Papacy. The crisis came when Jerrold advised the Pope to "feed his flock on the wafer of the Vatican." This happened in 1850.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

I did well enough. Made myself heard. Left as soon as I well could."

" *May 18th.*

"I read Goldsmith, variously. What did Dr. Johnson *cancel*, when he finished the 'Traveller' for him? Forgot if I ever knew, that the last four lines of the 'Deserted Village' are Johnson's. They are lofty, but they were not wanted, Goldsmith's finish was in better keeping with the poem."\*

" *May 19th.*

"My nonsense 'Prophecy,' † as heretofore, and not, I trust, less absurd than when I invented the feature.

\* \* \* \*

"Prince Arthur fell out of window, Buckingham Palace."

" *May 21st.*

"Went into the 'Ornamental'—a warm, fine afternoon—had a cigar, read Plato's 'Republic,' under a tree, and felt that I had much to be thankful for. Wish I could get rid of a pain in my left side, which I am told is of a mechanical sort, arising from too much fat, or else is wind. It often goes away for a long time. Plato very good about old age, which frees you from several 'furious masters,' but he might add that it subjects you to some sulky ones."

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\* To "The Traveller" Johnson furnished line 420,

"To stop too fearful, and too faint to go," together with the last ten lines, except the last couplet but one. This couplet contains Goldsmith's mistake about "Luke's iron crown." As a matter of fact it was not Luke Zeck, but George, his brother, who was punished by his head being encircled with a red-hot iron crown.

† "Punch's Derby Prophecy," which was now an annual feature of the paper.

## THE MISCREANTS OF THE COMMUNE

S. B. TO PERCIVAL LEIGH.

" 6 KENT TERRACE,  
" REGENT'S PARK,  
" N.W.  
" *Rogation Sunday.*  
" (*Ergo, rogo.*)

MY DEAR LEIGH,

" Does it occur to you to write a few lines on the  
ct that 'The Astronomer Royal is made a C.B.' ? \*

" He is a good fellow, and 'tis fit that if a C.B. be an  
mour, such should have it.

" Fault of better, the above line 'The Astronomer,'  
c., would make a sort of burden to the verse, but of  
urse I only mention this to save you trouble.

" I delivered my oration, and sat next Monsignor  
pel, who is *delightful*, but fear not thou for my  
ligion."

*May 24th.*

" While England was at the horse race (the Derby)  
iris was in flames. The miscreants of the Commune  
ed the Tuileries, the Louvre and various other public  
ildings. We heard of this at night, and hoped the  
ory was exaggerated. But next morning brought  
e confirmation. It is horrible. I have had no such  
nsation since the war began."

*May 25th.*

" Papers full of the infernal news from Paris. I can't  
ite about it here. So much for equality and atheism."

*May 29th.*

" Brutal and horrible news from Paris, the Arch-  
shop and numbers of other 'hostages' have been

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\* The result was the very poor "Airy, C. B.," *Punch*, May 27th,  
which Leigh did use the proposed line, and perhaps found it a  
rden to himself as well as to the verses.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

the 'Coming Race'\*—an attempt to describe an improved set of beings, but most of the book dull, and no real novelty, after Swift and the Peter Wilkins† creatures."

" June 6th.

" E. asked me, in writing my memories, not to put in sundry things which make us laugh, but are best forgotten—a kindly thought."

" June 10th.

" Came by appointment, Arthur Hamilton, Stationers' Hall Court, to offer me the ' London Letter ' which E. Yates has foolishly flung up. Good terms, 5 guineas a week. I should have liked it some time ago—now, of course, my position forbids my signing a column of gossip, and they want the *name*. Recommended Sala.

\* \* \* \*

" Rego sends his College papers, the exam. awfully stiff, and it does him the highest honour to have answered so many questions, some of a most searching kind. He marked those he replied to. God bless him, and make him a happiness to himself and to his mother, whether I live or go! But I hope to be spared to help him and Cecil on."

" June 10th.

" Talk about the new *Punch* Banquet Hall, in which it is proposed to dine on Tuesday, which was to have been Wednesday, but I had the day altered, because of Frith's dinner. Kiki has done an invitation card, with our portraits; I am perched on *Mr. Punch's* head, and have the 'knife' which I used to throw down as signal that to my mind we had a good cut."

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\* Published anonymously this year by Lord Lytton.

† "Life and Adventures of Peter Wilkins," by Robert Paltock.

## THE NEW BANQUETING HALL

“ June 13th.

“ This was the day of our first dining in the handsome room that has been fitted up at No. 10 Bouverie Street. The dinner was to have been Wednesday, and is so mentioned on ‘ Kiki’s Kard,’ but I asked Tuesday, being engaged Wednesday. Went down early. The men met in my room. All attended, except H. Mayhew, who was ill, so to him we sent a picture of himself in bed, nursed by Kiki, as an old woman, Kiki’s drawing, and we signed it. A special sort of repast, with turtle, from Ring (Birch’s). All excellent. Party very friendly and merry. Tichborne case the chief topic, and questions of memory, some contending that a man could forget all his child-life, friends, teachers, books, homes. I do not think many men can make such *tabulæ rasæ* of their minds. We drank to ‘ dear old *Punch*,’ by W. H. B. No ‘ speakings.’ Three cuts were suggested, Leigh one about ‘ John Bull and the Army Purchase Money;’ Taylor one, ‘ The Cabinet Cart struggling up hill, with loss of baggage;’ Brooks one, ‘ Gladstone as a Pioneer, cutting into an enchanted wood of military vested interests.’\* This was adopted, and T. T. gave J. T. the words. Sambourne d. with us, first time, but as a guest on this special occasion only, at present. I proposed the ‘ Five Partners.’ Going away, I said I hoped we should have many hundreds of jolly dinners there, and the answer was ‘ Hooray.’ There! So much for a meeting that has been in view for many a day, and it was very successful.”

“ June 16th.

“ Actually, contributions from Ponny for *Punch*! They must be set up before I have an opinion, I

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. \* “ The British Pioneers,” representing Gladstone and Cardwell hewing down Army abuses in face of the opposing “ Colonels.”



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

can't read his spiders, now more wriggling than ever."\*

" June 17th.

" L. Romer has got £100 for her picture of the ' Betrothal,' from Waring. Come, my *protégée* prospers. She calls herself so, though I have not done so much. Yet I *have* served her."

" June 20th.

" Tichborne case still on, and to-day came to this point. Sir John Coleridge asked the claimant, ' Are you Arthur Orton ? ' Seems that Ballantine told his client, the claimant, that it would be either success, or penal servitude. Sir A. Cockburn† wishes he were counsel in it—he ' could have doubled the fellow up much quicker. ' "

" July 9th.

" Discussed ' my health,' as Burnand says, and nearly arrived at the conclusion that I ought to make a complete holiday, at some foreign ' Bad ' at any price, and Carlsbad, if Erasmus Wilson approves. I feel that this would be a wise course, and it might give me many years of health to work for ' my three. ' "

" July 18th.

" Cancelled a leaf in an old diary, because I had expressed myself intemperately, and from temper. Had it been a sincere entry, it should have stayed, with a comment."

" July 26th.

" W. B. told me that every one mentioned to him the great and marked improvement in *Punch*. It is

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\* Apparently they were not found suitable, for Mr. Spielmann says that nothing appeared from Mayhew's pen for some years before his death, and he died in May, 1872.

† Who afterwards presided over the criminal trial.

## A SNOBBISH CELEBRITY

improved, but it is not what I hope to make it. My men are bricks, but not lively."

It was about this time, Mrs. Panton tells me, that Shirley met at Mr. Frith's house, where he used to dine Sunday after Sunday, a very celebrated personage whose name was upon every one's lips. Shirley had lately been in the country and seen the great man's parents, a worthy couple who kept a toll-bar. On his introduction by Mr. Frith, Shirley said :—

" I saw your people at —— last week, Mr. ——, and they are longing for a sight of you."

The great man turned and fixed him with a glare—

" I have no people at ——, Mr. —er Brooks," he said and turned away.

" Well, that's a good one," said Shirley to Miss Frith, " his old mother showed me a tea-tray he'd given her, and a letter, and told me she had only had glimpses of him since he'd gone out to be a servant to the family whose name he had taken, but he'd promised to run down and see them this time, and I was to give the message. I'll be hanged if I speak to the skunk."

It is only right to add that the following year Shirley took up the cudgels on behalf of the great man, when he found the world cavilling at his undoubtedly notable achievement.

S. B. TO MRS. F. ROMER (MRS. JOPLING ROWE).

" MY DEAR MRS. ROMER,

" I am so glad to think you are out of detestable London (which is the best place in the whole world, however, except just now), and that you are looking at and diving into the ' melancholy ocean,' as Mr. Disraeli chooses to call it.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

“ I wish I was as fortunate. I cannot get away yet, however, and when I do go, I suppose it will be to Harrogate, as I am told the waters will renovate the Brooks. My folks will very likely go to Scotland—my elder boy is making a walking-tour in the Lakes, and writes from Ambleside—which *I* have never seen, but the young get everything in these days.

“ I make Sunday ‘ outs,’ like a housemaid, and was yesterday at Mr. Burnand’s, Edgware, lying in an easy-chair and smoking, with the like athletic sports. But there was a *noble* moon to light up the pretty country, coming home. I suppose you have no moons in Wales, which is a pity. The Irish bard says :—

“ ‘ Long life to the moon, for a fine noble creature,  
That serves us with lamplight each night in the dark,  
While the sun only shines in the day, which, by nature,  
Wants no light at all, as you all may remark.’ ”

“ I have my solitary ‘ eat ’ at the ‘ Bedford ’ most Saturdays. I was there the other night, but heard no news, except that . . . folks are getting away. . . . Mr. Frith asked us for a final dinner yesterday, but we were engaged, or I should have liked to see him. He is going to Boulogne-upon-the-sea. The head of your profession, I mean of course, Sir Edwin Landseer, is not at all better, indeed, I hear, from the best authority, that mentally he is worse, and in that provoking condition of mind that makes him see enemies in friends : it is sad that there should be such an evening to such a life.\* . . . If I were you (and do not I wish that I were), I would not work much while making holiday. It spoils two things and prevents your returning like a Giantess refreshed. When I get away, I *try* not even

---

\* He died in 1873.

## SIR JAMES PAGET

to answer letters, and am sometimes successful. We all work too hard—as I have said in print this week.

“ Believe me,  
“ Always yours affectionately,  
“ SHIRLEY BROOKS.”

“ *August 5th.*

“ Wrote four lines on Paget’s baronetcy. Repeated them to Rego, who said, ‘ There’s any of our legs off, gratis.’ ”

“ THE SWORD OF MERCY.

“ Mr. Paget, the eminent surgeon, has received a baronetcy.”

“ Thanks for the word, good QUEEN, which thou hast said—  
‘ Give the Red Hand to Paget, wise and brave ’ :  
For when *his* firm and gentle hand is red,  
’Tis dyed that he may succour or may save.”

The following letter refers to the Walter Scott Centenary Dinner at which Hepworth Dixon was about to preside :—

S. B. TO WILLIAM HEPWORTH DIXON.

“ ‘ PUNCH ’ OFFICE, 85 FLEET ST.,  
“ 11th August, 1871.

“ MY DEAR HEPWORTH,

“ I have every prospect of getting away on Sunday, and as it is matter of health I do not like—at least I do like, but I oughtn’t to give up the duty for the pleasure I should have in attending the banquet. So give the toast to a worthier son of Sparta (and bid him be Spartan), and believe me that I am really sensible of your kindness in offering it to me. I wish you a great success, which they have not had in the north. The high priest of drunkenness, blasphemy, and obscenity, Robert Burns, takes all the shine out of his betters, there.

“ Ever yours,  
“ S. B.”

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

Notwithstanding Shirley's advice given in a preceding letter, he did not hesitate to "spoil" his own rare holidays by working. Scarcely a day passed without one or more letters to his deputy, scarcely a day that he did not forward something to help the "make-up." Far away though he was from the horses, he still kept a tight hand on the reins. An excerpt from a letter of Sept. 17th, to William Bradbury makes this very clear :—

"Dear old Professor does his work very carefully, and I can easily understand he enjoys it, but of course I have my wire laid on to him, and this facility hugely promotes my own peace of mind."

How actively he kept the "wire" operating is obvious from the letters which follow :—

S. B. TO PERCIVAL LEIGH.

"GRANBY HOTEL,  
"HARROGATE,  
"August 23rd, '71.

"MY DEAR LEIGH,

"Thanks for your note of yesterday. I hope you had a pleasant repast, and struck out a good thing. But no doubt this will cross a note from you. I sent up the 'Essence'—may send up some bits. The Sambourne cut will be all right.

"We have had lovely weather, but it is very wet to-day. However, we are a very large party here, and can amuse one another; the drawing-rooms always contain many ladies who are willing to talk and laugh, and when one wants a change, there is a smoking-room

## HIGH LIFE BELOW STAIRS

with several *habitués* who know men and cities. I do not think that there is a book in the house, except the Visitors' Book, which is not exciting. But, though the air is beautiful, and sweeps over the moors, health-bringing, there is a marvellous exposition of sleep comes on one, and a decided indisposition to mental effort.

"I have no particular progress to report touching myself. 'From information I received,' I thought it best to acclimatize myself, before going at the sulphurs, and *this* I do under medical advice here, to which I am accredited by my own doctor.

"Swain sent me two sketches by Ralston.\* I have accepted one, and written direct to Ralston to say so. You will have it in due course—small boys and a huge dog. Perhaps you will mention this to Swain (and give him my address, in case he has anything to say or send to me,) on Friday.

"There is an odd custom here which must have existed in the days of Mr. Matthew Bramble (do you remember about Harrogate in 'Humphrey Clinker'?). The *first* man servant of a gentleman who arrives at an hotel in the season is called 'My Lord,' and treated with reverence by all his fellow servants. The domestic of a friend of mine here wears the honour, and told the ladies' maid that 'he was a nobleman, but *not a good match*, so he wasn't afraid of being run away with by any of the ladies.' The menial has humour.

"Ever yours faithfully,  
"SHIRLEY BROOKS."

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\* Mr. W. Ralston, who was about this time "discovered" by Mr. Joseph Swain and introduced to Shirley Brooks. He contributed regularly to *Punch* for about ten years.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

DITTO TO DITTO.

“ GRANBY HOTEL,

“ HARROGATE,

“ *August 25th, 1871.*

“ MY DEAR PROFESSOR,

“ I have no doubt that Jackides will make a capital holiday cut, and the title is excellent. Tomorrow, of course, I shall get the number, and should there be anything to suggest, I shall telegraph to you at No. 10, saying that a parcel is coming. In fact, I'll telegraph in any circumstances, to make all minds easy, though I daresay that I shall have nothing to say. You will have found that I sent up a few scraps, and returned the proof 'Essence.' Sambourne's picture\* is remarkable—nearly as good as dear old Bennett would have been.

“ Just look at my '*Hamlet*' quotation; first, is it in 'Hamlet'; second, if the first words should be altered please alter—the end I think must remain—'Roundell'd into sleep.'†

“ Yesterday wet; to-day sun, but blowing half-a-dozen gales.

“ I believe that like the Indian Quaker, who was very holy all day, but at night went out and as 'Nick of the Woods' slew Indians by the dozen, you have two characters—are jolly at the Council Board, and disguise yourself afterwards and go and make people take the pledge.

---

\* A wonderful initial "T" covering three-quarters of the page. *Punch*, Sept. 2nd, p. 87.

† For once Shirley's memory was at fault. It was *Prospero* who spoke of life "being rounded with a sleep."

## A NOTABLE "CARET"

"Remember me to all who will take brandy and seltzer in your editorial chamber on Saturday.

"Ever yours, *obliged*

"S. B.

"Nicholls of Mile End, Esq."

S. B. TO W. H. BRADBURY.

"GRANBY HOTEL,

"HARROGATE,

"August 22nd, '71.

"MY DEAR WILLIAM,

"Poor Mrs. Lemon has got from Gladstone's secretary an answer assuring her that 'her claims to a pension on the Civil List have been carefully considered. But in view of the number of pressing cases

'much regrets that he

before him he cannot give any pledge whatever on the subject.'

"(The words with *caret* are in the note as I have given them—happy after-thought, 'be civil.'). So much for that matter. I think we might try indirect pressure, or at all events manage to get such a decided appeal as would justify our bringing the case forward. I will write to you again with my notions hereon.

"I am here and not before it was needful to come. 'You have worked too hard and too long,' says Dr. Sibson, and unless I conquer those results of gout, I shall submerge one of these days. However, I am going at work in earnest with the waters, and I hope that I shall soon find an increase of vitality.

"If you come up, I suppose it will be to return to the fresh air, which I hope is doing good to you and



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

yours. Remember me kindly to Wagnew, Jagnew  
and Tagnew,\* and

“ Believe me

“ Ever yours faithfully,

“ SHIRLEY BROOKS.

“ W. H. B., Esq.”

S. B. TO PERCIVAL LEIGH.

“ GRANBY HOTEL,

“ HARROGATE,

“ August 29th.

“ MY DEAR LEIGH,

“ Touching the ‘ L.C.’, † I need not remark that the times are ‘ barren, barren, beggars all.’ I hope that some ‘ happy thought ’ will strike the Council, and that my suggestions will be merely used in case you don’t find anything better.

“ 1. *Thiers* resigning every twenty minutes is not unamusing, and we have not had a foreign cut for some time. If, somehow, he could be made as a very little, cocky old husband, bullying a handsome wife, France, and swearing that if he were interfered with in the management of the house, he would get a divorce—or have a separation—it might be comic. She might say ‘ *Mais, mon cher petit Adolphe*, I would do all you like ; do not be so “ bumpshus,” my little angel.’

“ 2. The French overtures to Ireland, or Ireland fawning on the French. John Bull might be looking at Ireland doing this to a *Republican*, and saying (to this effect), ‘ You think he will be a better friend to you than your old Grumpy. I thought you tried that some years ago (the time when France deluded Ireland with hopes, and then said that “ having effected the

---

\* (Sir) William, Mr. John and Mr. Thomas Agnew.

† The Large Cut.

## PETULANT MONSIEUR THIERS

desired diversion, she had done all that was wanted").' The Famine might be hinted at and our liberality. If you *discuss this* topic I think you'll get something.

" 3. John Bright, fishing, and in a rage at being disturbed with a telegram about the House of Lords. ' Verily a right thing to protest, verily a right thing to protest, and now be off with you, or I'll lose that infuriated fish.' (You saw what he said.)

" 4. Gladstone, invited by a democrat or cad-radical to pitch into the House of Lords (into a nobleman), suggests to his friend that on the whole it might be as well to wait, as the lord has some merits and many friends. (See *his* letter to the fellows at Leeds.)

" 5. You have the Ayrton notions, sent last week.

" 6. If you can't make anything out of them, and nothing else occurs to the Council, you had better read the enclosed letter from a correspondent.

" This being only a business letter, I add no more, except that I shall raise my glass to you all, with best wishes, about 7.30 Wednesday.

" Ever yours, and all of you,\*

" S. B."

DITTO TO DITTO.

" PUMP ROOM,

" HARROGATE,

" August 30th, '71.

" MY DEAR LEIGH,

" The above is the Temple of Health, in which at 8.15 every morning yours truly sacrifices himself, by

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\* M. Thiers was chosen as the victim. He was for ever losing his temper in the National Assembly and threatening to resign. The "cut" was entitled "Hobson's Choice," and Gladstone was put into the same boat as Thiers.

" M. Th . . rs. ' *Hé, mon ami!* They say I am petulant, but—'

" Mr. Gladstone. ' Ah, *M. le Président*, just so! They say I'm irritable, but—*they can't get on without us!*' "

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

way of doing things to have let him call them all Editors. But if it was only his and Henry Mayhew's (not likely), the case is somewhat altered. He always said that he *alone* was the Editor always. You know whether you, a much older *Punch* man than anyone else now, looked in the slightest degree to anybody else for Editorship. Maybe you would not mind saying this in *N. & Q.*, but of this hereafter. I want to know whether you have any recollections as to the 'Shilling's Worth of Nonsense.'

"This is a horrid scrawl, but I have had a very long walk, and my hands are full of the vital fluid. A glorious day for walking over 'our' moors; also I went to church, for three minutes."

"Sept. 2nd.

"Gave 'Aspen Court' to Miss Hicks. Her father told me that Sir Francis Doyle, Professor of Poetry, told him that Browning told *him* that the 'Good News'\* did not refer to any historical event, but that he wrote it on board a vessel, happening to feel that 'Pegasus wanted a canter.' A good galop he got."

### S. B. TO PERCIVAL LEIGH.

"GRANBY HOTEL,

"HARROGATE,

"Sunday, Sept. 3rd, '71.

"MY DEAR LEIGH,

"'Yours to hand'—also *Punch*. The number is all right, thanks to you. The title of the cut I like.† It is not too severe. In fact, the severity is against the Opposition, who have no horse to run against

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\* "How they Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix."

† "Hobson's Choice," mentioned in the note to letter of August 29th.

## HARROGATE AND OLD HARRY

Gladstone. I have said this to Fred. Quite right not to alter the making up for T. T.'s verses ; he explained to me why he was late, and that Mrs. Taylor had copied the poem, to prevent mistakes, but noon on Saturday would have been late under (I mean *in*) any circumstances. I will write to him, however.

“ Sufficient for the day is the cut thereof, but I think the *next* should bear upon the Army *and* Navy bunglings. F. C. B.'s par. is particularly to the point, and taken with mine, will show you what I think we might try to express. Think this over, will you ? I will send any idea that may occur. I am in a military circle here, in the smoke room, and a sensible one, and I hear the oddest things of jobbing and blundering. There was a contract for bridles and bits for *mules* during the Crimean war, and when an officer who had seen mule service represented to the authorities that a mule never had such a thing as a bit in his mouth, he was almost kicked. This is only one of heaps of things of the sort.

“ I scribe to you in our big drawing-room : the hotel is gone to church, with a deduction in favour of (or *against*) men who have retired to their own rooms to pretend to be at their devotions.

“ There is a Harrogate rhyme, it seems—something this way :

“ ‘ When Old Harry flew over the Harrogate Wells,  
His attention was drawn to the mixture of smells—  
Says he, ‘ I don't *know* where I've happened to roam,  
But I'm sure, by the scent, that I'm not far from home.’

It is no exaggeration, *i.e.*, in the spring district, about a mile from here. You'd think it was the site of the Cities of the Plain. But Lot's wife has also been dissolved in the waters, which make one as thirsty as Tantalus. A very sensible doctor here, who insists

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

on a certain moderation of diet, but d—d 'drugs,' as he profanely calls them. The symptoms you suggested have come, and he says 'All right, shows the sulphur is taking hold.' . . .

"Quite right about the Alexandra\*—the advertising of this. Ozokerit, and other things try to ear-wig the publisher, and suggest puffs in exchange for 'ads.', but we leave that to *Fun and Judy*. You can easily evade such beggars, even if you adopt the boatswain's reading of evasion.

"Ever yours faithfully,  
"S. B."

DITTO TO DITTO.

"GRANBY, HARROGATE,  
"Sept. 5th, '71.

"MY DEAR PROFESSOR,

"To gain the extra post, I will direct the letter with any suggestions for L. C. † to you to the 'Bedford.' This will save you the trouble of going or sending to Bouverie Street. I would have done so last week, had I known of your change of rendezvoo.

"I have usually abstained from Tichborne, but on the whole I am glad the little par. appeared, for his friends stick pars. in his favour into the country papers, and I had thought of sending up a '*quip modest*,' or so.

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\* "The Alexandra Palace and Muswell Hill Estate Management Co.," which was advertising itself by public lectures and apparently other ways. But it was to no purpose, for its affairs were wound up five months later. It would be well if journals, which assume a very high moral attitude in these days, would follow *Punch's* example and refuse to log-roll their advertisers by puffs indirect.

† Large Cut.

"I SHOULD JUST LIKE TO SEE THE MAN"

"Tenniel will no doubt let you know of his whereabouts in the country, in case of any tremendous event happening, but this is singularly unlikely.

"If you send me a line *from the 'Bedford'* to say what you decide on (the soberest of you can write it) and let the 'Bedford' post it that night, I shall get it about 4 on Thursday. . . .

"Ever yours,  
"S. B.

"P. L., Esq."

S. B. TO GEORGE DU MAURIER.

"GRANBY HOTEL,  
"HARROGATE.  
"Friday, Sept. 8th, '71.

"MY DEAR KICKEY,

"I hear from Fred that you are established. I hope you have warm weather—ours is of the kind Jerrold called embracing. My folks are in Paris, Hotel of New York and Londres, Place du Hâvre, and say they are comfortable, but they go on to Heidelberg at once, I believe.

"The above edifice holds me every morning at 8.10, when I drink one pint of sulphur ;  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an hour later, another—and being thus diabolically refreshed, I come home to a huge breakfast. Coming out of the above temple this morning, I was talking to a very pretty girl ; somehow we spoke of obedience to husbands. 'I should like to see the man whom I would obey,' she said, with a graceful toss of the head. 'I believe that you would *very much like to see him,*' I said, with my usual, etc. She laughed. I don't know whether there is anything in the wit that would expand into a cut,—an old maid might make the reply, but you have it as it happened, or it might be that young — wished he

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

dared say, 'You see him, adored one.' No, this spoils it.\*

"Another fact. At some country place one of two young ladies, in the shop that is the post-office, said to the post-mistress, 'How late you sent out the letters this morning, Mrs. ——.' 'Yes, Miss, but you see I had such a lot of *all these post cards to read.*' I believe she thought this one part of her duty.

"Fred joins you, I believe. Do not go on the scoop too much. But I think Folkestone affords no great opportunities for frantic dissipation. I went to meet a young lady coming over from France, and I knew she was good-looking, but when I beheld her, hagged and wretched from the sea, I thought that if I had been engaged to her, I should have tried to back out, it was a revelation of what she would be ten years later.

"There goes the bell for lunch. I don't want none, but people think you are ill if you are not always eating, so I shall go and have some potted salmon. It is a 'basis for a smoke.'

"Kindest regards to Mrs. du Maurier from

"Yours ever,  
"S. B."

"Sept. 22nd.

"At dinner, Rector Gordon not having come in time to say grace, it was suggested to another parson, a Mr. H., better known as 'Cackles,' to do so, but he refused, saying, he would not 'play second fiddle.' A sweet type of divine."

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\* Du Maurier did use the joke a month later.

"Miss Minerva Bristlington (fiercely), '*Honour and obey*, indeed! Ha! Ha! I should just like to see a man ask *me* to "*honour and obey*' him."

"('I've no doubt you'd like to see him very much indeed,' thought the two Miss Marigolds, but they didn't say so)."

## “NOT MUCH BORED”

S. B. TO MRS. F. ROMER (MRS. JOPLING ROWE).

“September 13th, 1871.

“MY DEAR LOUISE,

“Your kind note (no date) has followed me here, and ‘here’ will, I suppose, be my address for some time, as I find air, waters, and idleness are agreeing with me ‘uncommon.’ I am so glad that you enjoyed your sojourn in Wales, and that you can now address yourself to work, more lightly ‘handicapped’ than before. (Excuse the racing word, but I am in Yorkshire, which is this day simply mad over the St. Leger.) I suppose that you do not know this place. It is not a place. There are houses on a moor, and springs of more or less abominableness everywhere. That is High Harrogate, where I am. There is a sort of town called New Harrogate, which has its shops and hotels and fireworks, etc., but we only ‘condescend’ to this when we want to shop, or to get at the worst sulphur of all. But everywhere are beautiful districts to go to : ruins, rocks, wells, and the rest, and we make excursions in carriages, and lunch, and flirt (that is, the younger ones do) and agree that we are enjoying ourselves. A huge drawing-room in the evening—music, cards, chess, backgammon, scandal, all the luxuries of the season. This is the old aristocratic hotel, the county folks, and the other magnates come here, and we have heiresses and some beauty. We sit down to a *table d’hôte*, from 60 to 70. I am not much bored. My family is at Heidelberg, I hope, that is, they were to leave Strasburg on Monday for the other place, and they complain of the *heat*. We have no such complaint here, and I have just been feeding the smoking-room fire with the *Punch* correspondence.

“I hope you’ll get this note, but I have forgotten the right district in which Coleherne Terrace is, but I know it is in the Directory.



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

smoke. He is a delightful man, and I am glad that you *now* choose such excellent companions. It was not always so ; but we need not revert to the follies of youth—we have all been young.

“ I should like this colour\* to be predominant in the picture I ask for ; and I am, dear Mr. Frith,

“ Yours faithfully and sincerely,

“ MISS BAYNES.”

S. B. TO PERCIVAL LEIGH.

“  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 6 p.m.

“ MY DEAR PROFESSOR,

“ To-day, for the first time in my medical holiday, I don't send you anything. I suppose the sulphur took to curing me too fast, but to-day just when I was going to write for you, came a kaleidoscopic dance of atoms, and all I could do was to shut my eyes, and go to sleep. I have awaked just before post-time, and merely send a line to say so ; of course, I will telegraph freely should there be need, which I dare say there won't be.

“ Ever,

“ S. B.”

S. B. TO W. H. BRADBURY.

“ GRANBY,

“ HARROGATE,

“ 26th Sept., 1871.

“ MY DEAR WILLIAM,

“ The doctor, you will be glad to know, I know, makes a very favourable report of me, and declares I shall be 'set up.' He advises me to make about another fortnight and 'clench the nail.' I feel so much better that I want to get back to work, but it may be

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\* The colour that was to be “ predominant in the picture ” was indicated by a piece of bright red paper, attached to the letter.

F.S.A.

wiser to lay in a good stock of health. I feel quite 'another party.' But I shall send up copy to Leigh, indeed I have done this more or less, all the time, for I feel, as I have often told you, that it is the brief epigrammatic bits that we don't get. Our horses make excellent *running*, but they don't *take fences*—to talk Yorkshire. And I have a notion for a little series of my own, when F. C. B. has done. In fact, I have been able, in leisure, to think over a deal.

\* \* \* \*

"I asked a young lady from Cambridgeshire—we were talking of local beliefs, etc.—whether they have any particular superstition in her county. 'Well—no—I don't know. *We go to church.*'\*

"Ever yours faithfully,

"SHIRLEY BROOKS.

"W. H. Bradbury, Esq."

On Oct. 3rd he makes the entry in his diary :—

"Ouvry†, at my wish, took down particulars, with a view to my joining the Antiquaries. One may as well have *some* initials to one's name."

That was on his last day at Harrogate.

On Oct. 4th he was back in town and wrote :—

"Thankful to be in London again, after the longest holiday I have had for many a long day."

Then came the inside of a week at Folkestone, and then he was in harness once more.

---

\* This seemed to please Shirley, for he repeats it in a letter to Lady Hardman.

† Frederick Ouvry, at that time Secretary and afterwards President of the Society of Antiquaries. Shirley was elected Fellow in the following January.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

S. B. TO MRS. FRITH.

" BEDFORD HOTEL,

" COVENT GARDEN,

" *Oct. 5th, 1871. 8.30 a.m.*

" MY DEAR MRS. FRITH,

" Many thanks for your kind invitation, which I received on arriving last night. But I must get some work done, and then be off to Folkestone, or I shall be sued in the Divorce Court. We return next Wednesday, finally, and then the holidays are over. As I left dear old Harrogate yesterday morning, I said, in the most pensive and affecting manner :—

" ' One long last sigh, for love and thee  
And then to busy life again.'

" Love means sulphur, but that wouldn't come into the line. I am sorry to hear of your tribulations, in trying to come over.

" ' It was an agony, 'tis now forgot.'

" These two Byronic quotations before breakfast you will believe that Yorkshire has done me good."

" Ever yours affectionately,

" SHIRLEY BROOKS."

S. B. TO MRS. FRITH.

" 6 KENT TERRACE,

" REGENT'S PARK.

" *Sunday, Oct. 15th, 1871.*

" MY DEAR MRS. FRITH,

" Many thanks for the very kind invitation received last night, on return from the — Gaiety, so called from its dulness, at present at least. Very sorry am I not to be able to dine with you on Wednesday. But I cannot put off the *P.* dinner (at which I must be present) for we are engaged to dinner on Thursday.

## YORKSHIRELY=LAVISHLY

hope, however, to see Sissy\* and her baby while they are in town. I must have a great talk with you and Frith about Yorkshire, which has done me so much good, that I shall always think well of it (in spite of the people), and I hope to re-visit it very soon, that is in the weather.

“ Tell Frith that his friend Miss Baynes sent him all sorts of kind messages. She is a dear funny old thing. When I said, going away, that I hoped to see her again, she jerked out, ‘ I don’t know then whether you will or not.’ The way they try (and succeed) to make one comfortable, in that house, is delightful, and old-fashioned as it is, I like it a hundred times better than the new places, where you are only No. 29, like a convict in prison. *Fish* is the weak point, all else is wholesomely, lavishly, Yorkshirely done. Pianoforte in the noke-room, made by manufacturer to the ‘ Prince of Wales,’ yes, but not Bertie, but Georgie the gorgeous! I made some of the girls play on it—how they screamed! But of this more when we meet. My wife’s best love and hopes that all goes on better than well in Hamilton Terrace.†

“ Ever yours affectionately,

“ SHIRLEY BROOKS.”

On October 30th he writes what, so far as his biographer is concerned, is perhaps the most poignant sentence in the whole of his voluminous writings :—

“ Finished indexing diaries—have all now done from 1850 to ’71, and this will help me much in composing the autobiography which I should like to *ave*.”

---

\* Mrs. Panton.

† Where lived Mrs. Oppenheim, Mr. Frith’s eldest daughter. The baby of 1871 is now a Captain in the Bays.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

One only consolation there is in the disappointment which all must feel that he was not spared to carry out his plan—the consolation that it can hardly be contrary to his wishes that such of his carefully preserved notes as have escaped the general destruction should be given to the public.

“ Nov. 5th.

“ Fred lends me Congreve, Wycherley, etc. ‘ Love for Love ’ was revived at the Gaiety on Saturday, but seems to have been horribly, but necessarily mutilated. Read it, and ‘ The Way of the World.’ Madame Vestris once suggested to me that it would be a fine thing to perform one of the old comedies just as written, but then, she said, we must have no *fools* in the house—meaning that the thing was to be regarded artistically.”

“ Nov. 8th.

“ A longish bit I writ in *Punch* about V. Hugo—‘ *Le Dernier Cri* ’ in the *Times*.”\*

“ Nov. 9th.

“ Very plain women, mostly, but lots of diamonds—there was a pair of white shoulders before me, however, which were pleasanter to look at than most things round, and this owner knew it, and was liberal. (This entry savours of levity, but I have just been writing an imitation of Pepys.)”

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\* “ *Le Dernier Cri de M. Victor Hugo*,” *Punch*, Nov. 11th, 203, is a clever skit on the great writer’s extravagance of thought and diction. “ They are gone, those Germans! . . . If I could hate them more than I do, it is because they have not dared to rob us of our art treasures. Fools, we might have mourned the loss of pictures and statues, but we should have had the consolation of feeling that they were gone to civilize a barbarous race, to teach Germany lessons in morality and humanity, etc., etc.”

‘ “WOMAN IN WHITE” ’

“ Nov. 10th.

“ Did a ‘ Pepys at Guildhall ’ for *Punch*.”

“ Nov. 22nd.

“ Suggested cut, Gladstone as a Scotsman, he having written that he is ever happy to appear in that character.”\*

“ Nov. 23rd.

“ The Prince of Wales is ill at Sandringham, typhoid fever, but it is stated that though the attack is severe, there is no danger. Physicians summoned. Just 10 years since his father d. of something of the same kind. I remember Pater came over to tell me, and I wrote verses in *P.* which were said to have gratified the Queen.”

“ Nov. 24th.

“ With E. to Olympic, to see the ‘ Woman in White.’ Pit box, O.P. lights in the way. Disappointed, of course. The story is well told, but it is not interesting on the stage, though very interesting in the book. Reasonably well acted—Vining† much better than I expected. Provincial accents among the company, which ought not to be in a London theatre.”

“ Nov. 25th.

“ *Dies donorum.* For the Rev. F. G. Wood sent me his handsome ‘ Insects at Home,’ a joy for Cecil. Smiles sent two books, which Rego will like. Mrs. Marriette, our neighbour, sent E. some magnificent perch. And last and most glorious of all, Sheriff

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\* Gladstone’s secretary had written, “ Mr. Gladstone is ever happy to appear in the character of a Scotsman.” In the cartoon he is represented dancing between two swords labelled “ Radicalism,” “ Toryism,”

“ And he’ll dance a long time, to ourselves as it seems,

While he balances wisely between *the Extremes*.”

† G. J. Vining, who acted *Count Fosco*.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

Bennett\* sent me a beautiful watch, keyless, with S. B. enamelled thereon! *Astræa Redux*. Editing as usual. W. H. B. and Fred out for a short time, but he is under the rigid Duplex. Dined alone, 'Bedford.' Wrote Rego. Then to Lyceum, box 5. E. there and C. Dickens, † to whom in his need she had luckily a seat to offer. First night of 'The Bells,' a drama from M. M. Erckmann-Chatrian. It is fantastic and poetic. A dream of a trial, and the truth extorted by mesmerism, is a bold and good idea. A Kean is wanted for the one part, but Irving did his best. We saw some 'Pickwick,' but it is necessarily flat. In the box E. told me of the watch. There is no reason why I should not accept it, and Bennett's note (which preserve) is in very good taste. I may as well note here that I replied next day, in a letter which may be read hereafter and will show how unexpected was such a memorial. How many watches have I had? First, the old gold one, C. W. B. But I forget its successor till I came to one I had of Joel Ellis. Then the silver one, now Rego's. Then the gold one I now wear of Jones's (which has varied only 6 minutes in 6 months), now this of the Sheriff's. There ought to be many presentations to come, for I have obliged hundreds of people. We'll see."

"Nov. 29th.

"Good fun. I put in *Punch* this week a flaming mock-puff of 'P. Book.' ‡ It is in the *Times* to-day. It ought to do good; anyhow, as I say, it is fun."

"Dec. 1st.

"Article for *Punch*, 'Gladstone's Religions.' (That

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\* (Sir) John Bennett.

† Junior.

‡ "*Punch's* Review of '*Punch's* Pocket-Book,' " Dec. 2nd, p. 236.

## OBJECTIONABLE STAGE-DANCING

fool Whalley keeps on asking him whether he is a secret Papist.)” \*

“ Dec. 4th.

“ Forster’s 1st vol. of Dickens’s life just out. It was new to me, as it will be to most, that C. D. as a boy of 10 stuck labels on blacking-bottles, and was ill-fed—there is a very touching bit of autobiography, saying how he tried to make his poor little money last all the week, by dividing it into parcels. E. thinks the publication will annoy the family. However, D. left these details *for* publication.”

“ Dec. 5th.

“ Went to the ‘ Garrick ’ at 3, and stayed there, except that I went in to Macmillan’s, who gave me some books, and asked me to d. at G., where he had a party, but as Sir C. Dilke, who has been spouting republicanism, was to be one, I would not go, hating to dine with a man, and abuse him in print, as I must do.

\* \* \* \*

“ Emily had gone with Mrs. Y. to the Philharmonic, Islington, expecting to see a pretty opera, which they had, and to have a box, which they had not, and this vexed me rather, as the stalls there are hardly places for her, and moreover there was dancing which ‘ shocked ’ her—the abomination for which the Alhambra was refused a license. I will pitch into this.”

“ Dec. 7th.

“ Collins and Lewes† stayed till 12. Forster’s

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\* Whalley had written to Gladstone asking whether he had secretly become a Romanist. Gladstone had replied that Whalley had asked him in a roundabout way whether he was “ the basest creature in the kingdom.” For Shirley’s article, *vide Punch*, Dec. 9th, p. 245.

† Wilkie Collins and George Henry Lewes.



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

'Dickens' talked of—they call it 'Life of J. F. with notices of C. D.' "

" *Dec. 8th.*

" Into town, looking for an easy day of final revision of the Almanac, and found that Ancutt had miscalculated his copy, and a great deal more was wanted. This, of course, I had to supply. Luckily, I had given myself good wine overnight, or a column and more of *facetiæ* might not easily have been managed. Rather a drag, as it was, but I have an odd habit of concocting nonsense. Sent away nearly all the pages to the foundry, for electrotyping, and arranged that the last was to be sent up to me. Home to d. and expected it, when came a note instead, saying that all 'fitted,' and Ancutt had sent on the page to the foundry. I was in the utmost rage, which was not very useful."

" *Dec. 9th.*

" Wrote for *P.* a paragraph about the Prince,\* which will do should he survive, but if, poor fellow, he does not, and I hear on Monday morning, we issue a second edition with a different record. I trust I shall not have to do it."

" *Dec. 10th.*

" *Observer*—no change. E. to church, telegram read by Haweis. The impression is that the doctors are just keeping him alive. Fred was announced. I thought he might be come on a Sunday to tell me the Prince was dead, just as dear old Pater, Fred's father,

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\* The Prince (our present gracious and beloved Sovereign) lay between life and death from Dec. 6th to Dec. 13th. "The deep anxiety," wrote Shirley Brooks, "at this moment pervading the country forbids our going to press without a word of record that we are all in sympathy with the Royal Lady who now watches by the bed-side of her eldest son, and that a nation's desire for his recovery is in earnestness second only to the prayer of his Mother and of his Wife."

## ILLNESS OF THE PRINCE OF WALES

came on Sunday to tell me the Prince's father was dead, 15th Dec., 1861.

\* \* \* \*

" This Sunday may be said to have been given up, by all, to the Prince of Wales. Sermons everywhere. Telegraph offices open at unusual hours. Rush everywhere for new editions of the papers. Fred came to me 3 times, first as above, then on his way from the club, lastly at 8 with Amy. Ancutt, by order, came and sat in the drawing-room 1½ hour waiting in case Fred should bring news.

\* \* \* \*

" The last telegram was this, which a boy brought up. It was in *Lloyd's* :—

" ' SANDRINGHAM,

" ' Sunday, 5 p.m.

" ' The Prince of Wales has passed an unquiet afternoon, with a return of the more urgent symptoms.

" ' (Signed) WILLIAM JENNER, M.D.

WILLIAM GULL, M.D.

JOHN LOWE, M.D.' "

" Dec. 11th.

" 1.30 this morning. ' Has had a little sleep—the symptoms unchanged.' Sorrowful work to read the papers to-day. A beautiful, because simple, note from the Princess of Wales to Onslow, the clergyman, asking him to introduce an early prayer for her husband, in which she could join, and then return to him. 11 a.m. I receive *Daily News* with a telegram dated 8.15. ' A restless night, with a further recurrence of the graver symptoms. This seems 'fatal.' Sent a few words to be added, if time allows, to the *P.* paragraph. . . .

" The Prince held on. Hawes went out in the evening, and reported the 5 p.m. news: ' A very restless afternoon, but the exhaustion not increased.' "

SHIRLEY BROOKS

" Dec. 12th.

" The Prince still lives. ' A very restless night, without signs of improvement.' Bloomer sent me a later one, 7.30 to-day. The above was 1.30 a.m. and said ' is passing,' and the second is ' very restless night, almost no sleep. Pulse continues fairly good.' "

" Dec. 13th.

" To-day there is a disposition to be hopeful. Last night ' the prostration had not increased.' To-day there is ' no change.' One would like to see the blue sky through the clouds, but I own that I cannot, yet.

\* \* \* \*

" Wrote Leader for *Illustrated*, to-day, early. (On the Prince, taking the idea of Hope, but before the messenger had taken it, I heard that the last news was unfavourable.) If the 14th (P. Consort) should end all ! \*

\* \* \* \*

" Sambourne d. and will do so for the future. He is very valuable as an artist. Almanac d., but we don't publish yet, until the Prince's crisis shall be over. We arranged two pictures, to use that which shall be fitting."

" Dec. 14th.

" ' Continues to be less restless.' Worn out, I fear, but it may be better news than it seems.

\* \* \* \*

" Tenniel came about the cuts, being bewildered, and we had a long talk, to the purpose. It is the ' Suspense ' † that must be recorded by *Punch*."

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\* The Prince Consort died of the same disease on Dec. 14th, 1861. So convinced was Shirley that recovery was hopeless that *Punch* was all ready to appear with black borders.

† The cartoon represented Britannia waiting with bated breath outside the door of the sick room.

## "SUSPENSE"

" Dec. 15th.

" We believe H.R.H. is out of danger. Bloomer, who has very civilly been sending me copies of the telegrams, sent this which I found on coming down, and which I embodied in the *H.N.* leader. 'A quiet night, debility great, but general conditions more favourable.' His living through the 14th is much, for some people."

" Dec. 16th.

" The Prince's danger is now held to be over. The excitement will be long remembered. Our cut will be 'Suspense,' and will record this."

S. B. TO MRS. (NOW LADY) HARDMAN.

" 6 KENT TERRACE,

" REGENT'S PARK,

" Dec. 19th, 1871.

" Tuesday.

" MY DEAR MRS. HARDMAN,

" . . . We heartily wish that you had settled in town, and we don't despair of your some day getting tired of bucolic life and coming back into civilization. When I was little, even in my own eyes, I had some picture cards with versicles on them. One I recollect ran thus—there was a shepherd pensively beating a sheep, and, I suppose, thinking ambitiously, for he was advised,

" ' Shepherd, seek not wealth or power,  
Let the green and leafy Bower  
And the hills and vales and trees,  
*And* the lowly cottage please.

" ' Can the gaudy gilded room  
Equal fields in summer bloom ?  
Quit not, *then*, thy farm and fold,  
Nor exchange thy peace for gold.'

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

The logic of the last verse was very powerful, but it never convinced me. You still like the lowly cottage and the leafy Bower (what is a bower?), but you will be wiser some day. Why, *we* can go and see Toole whenever we like! True, that is never, but the moral's the same.

"Reginald (altitude 7 ft. 11 inches) is home from Owens College, and Cecil (depressitude 2 ft. 1 inch) from the International. They are, thanks, very well. But the religious education is supposed not to be over until the Confirmation, so any tracts, etc., will be thankfully accepted.

"Ask the Beak\* to look at a paragraph in tomorrow's *Punch* about a man who *stole magistrates*.

"Mrs. Brooks sends you her best love, and says that when the gentle spring arrayed in ethereal mildness, shall { 

paint
deck

 } the meadows with delight, she hopes for the pleasure of visiting you. I need not add that she never expressed herself half so beautifully, or that the language is that

"Of yours ever sincerely,

"SHIRLEY BROOKS."

Always on the look-out for, and loving to share, comic things with his friends, he writes to the same lady on the same day:—

"There was a good misprint in a Devon paper. . . . Some festivity—Colonel Hill (I think) in the chair, and after speeches somebody rose 'and proposed the death of the Chairman' (loud cheers!)."

---

\* (Sir) William Hardman, whom Shirley nicknamed "Incarnate Justice."

## AS AMATEUR ACTOR

" Dec. 24th.

" A fine day. Felt somewhat gloomily, but had some affectionate words from E. at night that made me forget all that had crossed my mind. Mrs. Jerrold and Alice called. The latter is really very pretty and nice—to parody Pepys, 'did kisse her and so did my wife.' A capital talk with Cecil about the origin of language—his 'and for this reason' delightful in its gravity, and his reason was *good*, too. Rego expressed himself very properly about a not gentlemanly paragraph we had read in a paper—the right instinct, a coarser boy would have seen only fun. There—I have recorded good of each of them, bless them all three, and so ends diary for Xmas Eve."

" Dec. 26th.

" Kate Bateman Crowe\* wants to carry out our old whim of playing 'Bombastes' :† wants to do it on Isabel's b.-d. 'I shall never be satisfied if I don't play *Distaffina* to your *General*. Will you, or would it trouble you? We wouldn't be bothered with costumes or scenes.' Well, it's Christmas: let us laugh. Telegraphed

" 'The *General* you have made sends verses two:  
Gladly accepts. Leaves everything to you.'

In an hour and a half got telegram, 'Bless you. Will search for trusty aides.' Wrote Lacy for the book. . . . Wrote a 'Proclamation to Correspondents' for *Punch*." ‡

" Dec. 27th.

" Cab to 14 Grafton Street, where found Mrs. Bateman, Kate, Jenny,§ and Bella. We rushed into

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\* The well-known actress; married George Crowe in 1866.

† "*Bombastes Furioso*," burlesque by W. B. Rhodes.

‡ *Punch*, Jan. 6th, 1872, p. 12.

§ Virginia Bateman (Mrs. Compton.)

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

rehearsal, and had the greatest fun. Crowe came. I certainly never intended to perform any more, especially before 80, of whom a lot would be known to me, but we'll go in for a laugh at Xmas. Only one rehearsal, however, is odds against an amateur. But my doing it will please the three girls, and their mother, and I like them all excessively. Proposed to introduce the 'Jabberwock verses' from 'Thro' the Looking-Glass' instead of a song, as I don't sing that I know of. So home."

"Dec. 28th.

"Made up my 'part' of *Bombastes*, marking it, highly useful for I only know some of it. He ought to be very grave. . . . We 4 went at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 9 to Grafton Street. A great gathering. Crowd, the big room, a fine one, being reserved for supper. At 11.30 '*Bombastes Furioso!*'

<i>Artaxominous</i> (King of Utopia)	..	Kate
<i>Fusbos</i> (Minister of State)	..	.. Bella
<i>General Bombastes</i>	.. ..	.. S. B.
<i>Attendants or Courtiers</i>		
<i>Army—a short Drummer, a long Fifer</i>		Cecil (and) G. Crowe
<i>Distaffina</i>	.. ..	.. Jenny

It was so hot. We had no green room, but huddled behind a curtain. Got through somehow. Read the 'Jabberwock,' which I think puzzled sundry. Introduced some other gag. All went merrily, and the Batemen were delighted."

So ended the year 1871, with Shirley as *General Bombastes* hanging up his boots on a tree with the label :—

"Who dares this pair of boots displace  
Must meet Bombastes face to face."

## “ BOMBASTES FURIOSO ”

In comes the King, his hated rival, Miss Kate Bateman, and cuts down the boots. Shirley “ kills ” Miss Kate Bateman. Miss Bella Bateman, as *Fusbos*, “ kills ” Shirley. After which the dead men rise one by one, join the dance, and promise, if the audience likes, “ to die again to-morrow.”



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

DITTO TO DITTO.

“ Feb. 12th, 1872.

“ Mrs. Brooks has been very unwell. I want her to go away to Torquay, where friends keep asking her to come, but there is the Thanksgiving Procession \* to see. By the way, this will, of course, be a mull as usual. They ought to have all the Bishops in their white robes walking, singing ‘Come to my arms my Beamish Boy,’ and swinging censers. Have you seen the translation of that noble poem into German? I send it that you may learn it by heart. See here! A bookseller received an order to send two books to a customer. This is the way they were described :—

“ ‘ 1. Mill, on Liberty.  
2. Ditto on the Floss.’

“ Do you remember Byron says that Murray showed him an order from some country agent—‘The ‘*Harold*’ and ‘*Cookery*’ much in demand!

“ We saw ‘Pygmalion and Galatea’ † on Friday. It is the best thing for years, but the badness of English actors is frightfully displayed. Except Madge Robertson there is nothing *good*, and Miss — ought to be burned with fire. Still it is *the* piece of the time. See it, if you have not done so, but I dare say that you have, for I never, somehow, go to a play until it has run for months. I fancy Sothern will be very savage at not coming back in May. It is certain that except in *Dundreary* he never drew largely in London, but he made heaps of money in the provinces.”

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\* The Thanksgiving Service for the recovery of the Prince of Wales took place on February 27th.

† By [Sir] W. S. Gilbert, first produced Dec. 9th, 1871. Miss Madge Robertson (Mrs. Kendal) played *Galatea*.

## THE LADY AND THE GRINDSTONE

S. B. TO MISS MATTHEWS.

“ *Palm Sunday (March 24th), 1872.*”

“ MY DEAR TORIE,

“ From what I hear of your sermon to-day, I think that this sort of woman would meet Mr. H.’s approval. She reads the papers, and she acts vigorously.

“ ‘ PROPER PRECAUTIONS.—An old lady read a paragraph in one of the papers the other day, describing how a grindstone burst in a saw factory, and killed four men. She happened to remember that there was a small grindstone down in her cellar leaning against the wall ; so she went out and got an accident insurance policy, and then, summoning her servant, and holding a pipeboard in front of her, so that if the thing exploded her face would not be injured, she had the stone taken out into the road, where 24 buckets of water were thrown over it, and a stick was stuck in the hole, bearing a placard marked “ Dangerous.” She says it is a mercy the whole house was not blown to pieces by the thing before this.’ ”

“ But what I want to say is this. We are invited . . . on the 17th, and I want to know whether you are asked. Also which young lady is going to be wedded and to whom ? I suppose it is *Miss Ingram*. But give me any enlightenment you can, and in reward here is another Americanism for you :—

“ A New York paper has issued the following ‘ first warning ’ : ‘ We caution four black cats that are continually serenading in the back shed that there is a sausage shop two doors to the right.’ ”

“ What did you do yesterday ? Nothing, I suppose, and I helped you. I think it was the vilest day I ever saw. Charles Reade, in the *Observer*, simply and deliberately ‘ curses ’ it. He also uses ‘ excitive,’ which is a word, but not the one he should have used,

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

and lastly he speaks of 'Hemiplegia,' which means a palsy that afflicts one-half the body, and which, therefore, I should think would disqualify a man for rowing.

" This is my last :—

“ ‘ LATEST FROM NEWGATE.

“ ‘ No fools are found the Wagga-wock to bail ;  
So he who lied in Court still lies in Gaol.’ \*

" I had—have indeed, written some nonsense about Hot Cross buns, and given a recipe for making them less nasty. But I nearly escaped a hideous peril. I had suggested devilling them. Imagine *Devilling* a Hot *Cross* bun. As soon as it was on paper I saw my profanity, and tore it up. I have advised anchovies, which are not wicked, I believe, though most people who like them are.

" Shall I allude to Mr. Haweis's discourse, the part recommending ladies to read the Summary, and say that he meant the 'Essence' ? Which, by the way, is uncommonly good this week, that is, it is full of quotations, one of them 'Yankee Doodle' in Latin :—

“ ‘ To town came Doodle with  
Little horse and cudgel  
He adorned with a plume his hat,  
And said “ *Macaroni*.”

“ ‘ *Ad urbem ivit Doodlius cum  
Caballo et calone,  
Ornavit plumâ pileum  
Et dixit “ Macaroni.”* †

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\* The claimant was lodged in Newgate on March 7th to be tried for perjury, and on April 26th he was released on bail. So Shirley was rather premature.

† This referred to the "indirect claims" made by the United States for enormous pecuniary compensation in the *Alabama* case. Not only did they ask for ordinary "damages," but also for "the

L.S.B.

“Macaroni means, as I need not tell you, ‘dandyfied’—see ‘School for Scandal.’

“‘Were ever beheld such beautiful ponies,  
Other horses are clowns, but these, macaronies.’

“Most people think the *edible* is referred to. ‘How blest are we that are not simple.’

“Here’s a day. If it had been like this yesterday! My opinion is that it was intended to give us weather for yesterday, but the Clerk (who is married to the Daughter of the Winds, and therefore not beset with offers of wedlock) forgot Leap Year. Yet he ought to keep an almanac, the ‘*Vox Stellarum*,’ for instance.

“Next Sabbath’s Picture Sunday, and . . .

“*Enter Hawes (a servant).*

“H. ‘Miss Matthews and Mr. Matthews are in the drawing-room, Sir.’ (Letter abandoned.)

“S. ‘I come.’”

S. B. TO GEORGE DU MAURIER.

“*Good Friday (wet), 1872.*  
(*March 29th.*)

“KIKI, MY DEAR,

“There now! That’s all you get by having yourself printed in great red letters, and stuck on every hoarding. Such is our judicious backing of our Jew!

Parson .. .. .	2,251
Atheist .. .. .	1,038
Hebrew .. .. .	526
Son of a dyer .. .. .	15*

Were you one of the Hampstead 34? I was one of

natural loss incurred through the transfer of much of the American Commercial Marine to the British flag, the enhancement of insurance, the prolongation of the war, the addition of a large sum to the cost of the war and the suppression of the rebellion!” These outrageous claims were unhesitatingly rejected by the arbitrators.

\* For the London School Board.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

the Marrowbone 223. I got, and I suppose you got, a note saying that success was certain if those who promised would poll early. I got wet in polling early. Kuss everybody. Catch me believing in a seducious Dixon any more. I am going to upbraid him, but not on Good Friday. When I made my mark X on the ballot paper, I asked a Dissenting friend whether putting *that* against a Jew's name would not violate the election. He fainted.

“ ‘ WANTED, a good Plain Cook, in a gentleman's family ; washing put out. Wages £16 a year, and all found, including season ticket to the Crystal Palace, and half-holiday on Saturdays. Address, C. H. R., Post Office, Croydon.’

Show this advertisement to Mrs. du Maurier. I wonder whether 'tis genuine, or a sarcasm.

“ This is a good day for the poor holiday makers. Very well, serve 'em right. Let them go to church, and read improving works in the afternoon. Are you going a Picture round on Sunday ? If so, we may meet, but I won't go if the weather keeps like this, mind that.

“ My wife and son went to see Fechter last night. *Such a bad house.* Palpably, *il ne dessine pas.* Do you dine *chez* Sir H. Thompson on Sunday ? I am asked. I believe many of the guests are to be *actors*. I hope John Hare will be one. He is almost the only actor we have. . . . This is the hottest day we have had this year, so says the thermometer. It is depressing. That's why this note is all little scraps. I am not equal to a sentence.

“ If you could draw like the artist whose work I enclose it would be worth your while to take some lessons from one of the Academy Kallithumpkins. . . .

“ Ever yours,  
“ S. B.”

## THE CORPSE'S COUSINS

S. B. TO MISS MATTHEWS.

" April 9th, 1872.

" . . . . The days are gone when  
    " ' Barons o'er three counties galloped  
    The Hall's fair partner to behold  
    And humbly hope she caught no cold.'

But we may send a note to make the same enquiry, and hope none of you caught any. That wind all night was keen and the walk to the carriage venturesome for the lightly clad.

" Which runs fastest, heat or cold ?

" Heat, of course, because anybody can catch cold !

" This is rather queer. The master of ceremonies at a recent St. Louis funeral announced, ' The corpse's cousins will now come forward.' Talking of corpses, I suppose that house in Park Lane must be some kind of a lodging-house. I did not know that there were any such places there. The name at No. 13 is Theophilus Keene. I have written to Charles Keene to know whether he had anything to do with the murder. I do not much think that he had, but artists are eccentric. He has, however, much good sense, and if he did it had no doubt good reasons. Don't you like his cut enclosed ? The legend is not much, but the picture itself is very pretty.

" I have a good note from Frank Burnand, who says he has written a long and capital letter to somebody, but it can't go, because to direct it involves looking into the directory for an address, and the book is at the other end of the room. But he hopes in a few days to be equal to the exertion. He is all but well again, but had a relapse. He says he is gradually making his way from Torquay to Sussex, but as his next place is Launceston, I don't understand his theory of progression, *vide* map.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

“ You asked me about some poetry. Is Campbell’s ‘ Last Man ’ over the heads of your pupils ? Hardly, if ‘ Lycidas ’ isn’t. And the ‘ Last Man ’ is, I think, as fine as anything in the language. I never think it much matters about a child fully comprehending a thing *at the time*. It will gradually dawn upon him or her, and the sensation will be one for which gratitude should be felt. Like a woman discovering new and good qualities in a husband whom she has taken only because she liked him. Not that women often make such discoveries, or, if they do, they are not generous enough to declare them.

“ Did I ever show you a poem I wrote some years back, called the ‘ White Spotted Horse ’ ? It is very beautiful. So is the day, only I put my thermometer in the window, and the sun has burst it, and sent the red liquor over my blind. This would make a good poem, only I can’t think of any ideas, and sun isn’t a good rhyme to thermometer.”

DITTO TO DITTO.

“ 22nd April, ’72.

“ MY DEAR TORIE,

“ This is curious :—

“ ‘ A CASTLE BURNT DOWN.

“ ‘ TWO LIVES LOST.

“ ‘ *Early yesterday morning*, Derry Castle, the magnificent residence of Mr. William Spaight, situated upon the shores of Lough Dergh, near Killaloe, was burned to the ground *last night*. Two persons were burned to death in the fire.’

“ This is more so :—

“ ‘ MYSTERIOUS AFFAIR IN BRADFORD.

“ ‘ Alleged Confession of Murder Nine Years Ago.

“ ‘ A few days ago a well-known individual died

## A TRAP FOR LEWIS CARROLL

village not far from Bradford, and a short time  
sequent to his death made a confession, in which he  
ed that upwards of nine years ago he, in company  
two men, waylaid and robbed James Lawson, then  
ork-cutter in Bradford.'

. . . So you invaded a lot of exhibitions on  
riday. The crowd at what are called private views  
dreadful bore, or I should go oftener. Do you  
ce the prices Gillott's pictures are fetching? For  
'Dolly Varden' that sold for one hundred  
as, Frith got, I think, he said last night, £15.  
be sure this was many years ago. But there are  
e which have reached mad prices. I wish I had  
an artist—I suppose it is too late to begin now  
ould never be anything better than a mere  
demician.

I laid a trap in last week's 'Essence' about Dodson  
'Alice in Wonderland.' The author has walked  
it, and writes to Tenniel to say that he should be  
if the *error* were not corrected, as he does not  
his name known! 'How blest are we that are  
simple men.'\*

"Ever yours faithfully,  
"SHIRLEY BROOKS."

DITTO TO DITTO.

"May 5th, 1872.

. . . We went to 'Money' † last night. We had  
s in the front row of the stalls, close to the lights.  
we were rather hotter than Wimpole Street, as

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[In the "Essence of Parliament" for April 20th, 1872, Brooks  
mischievously fathered "Alice in Wonderland" and "The  
erwork" on Mr. Dodson, the then Chairman of Committees,  
was afterwards created Lord Monkbretton, ignorant of, or  
ing the fact that the real author spelt his name with a "g."  
3y (Lord) Lytton.



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

when fortune had rendered him independent of labour, he continued to share our counsels, and he never abated his earnest interest in our work. This testimonial is easy. But when we would speak of the manly simplicity and childlike affection of his nature, of his indomitable cheerfulness, of his ready generosity, and of his singular sweetness of temper, we can write only what must seem to those who knew him not, in excess of the truth, while it fails to do justice to our own knowledge of a beloved friend. But in the affectionate memories of us all his worth and lovingness will be treasured while memory remains to us. Heavy is the grief that has fallen on those who lived in friendship with the kind, the just, the gentle 'PONNY MAYHEW.' ”\*

S. B. TO MISS MATTHEWS.

“ August 11th, 1872.

“ . . . Parliament is up, thank Thor and Woden, and the stopper is in the 'Essence' Bottle.

“ We dined with Mrs. Charles Kean† last night, Queensborough Terrace. It was a renewal of an old friendship—that is, as regards me: I used to be intimate, but have not been to her house for many years. She is 67 and wears wonderfully. They have Cardinal Wolsey's hat, and a beautiful dagger of Henry Eighth from Strawberry Hill. I should like the dagger, it is *crusted* with jewellery; and a snuff-box, goldenish, given by Lord Byron to Edmund Kean.

“ I am asked to dine at the Club to-morrow, to meet Stanley, who discovered Livingstone, and I feel inclined to go. I suppose I ought. But I have nearly

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\* An unintentional caricature-portrait of Mayhew is to be found in Sir John Tenniel's representation of "The White Knight" in "Alice in Wonderland."

† Mrs. Charles Kean (Ellen Tree) had retired from the stage on her husband's death in 1868. She died in 1890.

## THOMAS CARLYLE

got into the Gallio stage about a good many things that people are enthusiastic over. Not that I think this a good state of mind, but there is the fact. I do not know the living man whom I would walk five miles to see. One man is very like another, especially the other.

"They won't let *Babies* into the British Museum. Somebody sends me a suggestion that they ought to be let into the *Mummy* department."

S. B. TO PERCIVAL LEIGH.

"12th August, 1872.

"MY DEAR LEIGH,

"You will like to know that I have a very pleasant note from a lady, 'Mary Carlyle Aitken,' who writes that Carlyle is very much pleased with the proof of 'our good-will to him.' He would have written himself, but his hand shakes, and writing is difficult and unpleasant to him. I am glad that he has been gratified. I said, in sending your verses, that it was due to him 'that he should see them before they were given to the public, and that though it would be absurd to suppose that he could be gratified with any tribute, it would afford honourable pleasure to thousands.' Which I take to have been the becoming way of doing the thing, and the result shows that he thought so too.\*

"It will be a very good Almanac. Some admirable pictures. For all your *invaluable* aid, much thanks. But you, and all of you, do make my work as pleasant as it can be, and, *outside*, everybody tells *proprietors*, etc., how good we are.

"Ever yours,

"P. L., Esq."

"S. B.

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\* *Vide* "A Birthday in December," *Punch*, Dec. 14th, 1872, p. 252. Certainly Carlyle was easily pleased, for the verses are dreadfully poor.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

In September Shirley was again undergoing a "cure" at Harrogate. Amongst those with whom he foregathered on this occasion were the Rev. John Oakley, then Vicar of St. Saviour's, Hoxton, afterwards Dean of Manchester, and his sister. When later Mrs. Brooks joined the party she told Miss Oakley that it was the only time she had seen her husband drawn to a clergyman. In this case the acquaintanceship ripened into intimacy, Mr. Oakley being attracted by Shirley's genial and pleasant companionship, and Shirley by Mr. Oakley's robust common sense. Here are my friend, Miss Oakley's, recollections of Shirley at this time :—

"In appearance Mr. S. Brooks, as I remember him in 1872, was almost exactly like the photo of him in his 'Wit and Humour,' published in 1875, only he looked a little older with a few streaks of grey (photo was probably taken a few years before), but the luminous brown eyes and full lips are very life-like. He was very genial and sociable and a most interesting talker—could be grave as well as gay, and equally welcome in the drawing-room as the smoking-room. In the evenings he was generally in the former, and always ready to talk, declining to join the elderly rubbers, indeed said he could not understand how anyone could want to play games when they could talk. He seemed very busy most of the day, and had large parcels from the *Punch* Office to go through weekly—and chiefly consign to the waste-paper basket, he told us! He was fond of asking questions, such as, 'If you were to be cast on a desert island with only three books, which three would you wish them to be?' His own choice, I remember he said, would include a prayer-book instead

## CLERGYMEN

of a Bible, which would be the usual vote, and he *must* have a copy of 'Rabelais.' His third, I am sorry to say, I have quite forgotten. He was careful to tell us that though 'Rabelais' had always been much to him, he did not advise us ladies to study him ! ”

Notwithstanding Mrs. Brooks's surprise at her husband's friendship with Mr. Oakley, it is nevertheless a fact that he was on very good terms with several other divines, from Dean Hole downwards. Indeed, he was rather fond of saying in his cynical, humorous way that he had several reverend friends, whose friendship he valued too much ever to go and hear them preach ! High Anglicanism he did not love at all. “ Turks put off their *shoes* on entering a church,” he one day said à propos of certain Ritualistic practices of which he professed to disapprove, “ and some Christian folks put off their *understandings*.” Not that Shirley's opinion on such matters was of any value whatever. Indeed, as likely as not, it was not his opinion, and he may merely have been seizing the opportunity, inveterate jester that he was, of making a not very clever play upon words.

From Harrogate he writes :—

S. B. TO MISS MATTHEWS.

“ THE GRANBY HOTEL,  
“ HARROGATE,  
“ Sept. 25th, 1872.

“ . . . We have *vile* weather. I am driven to a private room and a fire, and I work a little to prevent an influx of the cerulean demons. It is rather aggravating not to be able to get about. I had a good

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

8-mile walk on Sunday, but since that locomotion has been impossible. 'Marry good air,' as Justice Swallow says, but I prefer marrying sunshine. People have some fatuous idea that things will be better after the equinox, but I don't know why.

"The newspaper is a valuable civilizer, but it is not always rigidly accurate, *e.g.*, touching a performance at a so-called theatre last night: 'There was an excellent audience, the notabilities including Mr. Frith, R.A., Mr. Shirley Brooks, Editor of *Punch*, and Mr. Geo. Ellis, M.P.' 'Mr. Frith' is in Dorsetshire, 'Mr. Brooks' did not leave the hotel, there is no such person as 'Mr. G. Ellis, M.P.', but Mr. G. Elliott, who is not an M.P. Such are the materials for history of eminent personages.

"To the wrath of the proprietors of the hotels here, some of which are very handsome, the local authorities have ordered that they shall all exhibit *sign* boards. Our spirited little hostess here is all afire. I advised her to return the notice, scoring across it 'Matthew xii, v. 39,'\* and I think she will."

S. B. TO MISS MATTHEWS.

"8th of Dec., '72.

". . . Some Bishop said, 'Temper is nine-tenths of Christianity.' But what Bishop? If it's true I have been an awful bad Christian this week, having been into nine-and-twenty distinct and separate rages. But it was not my fault. People have been so stupid. The Almanac is not done, but I think Wednesday will see it out of my hands, and the time it has taken will be deducted from the time in purgatory, if accounts are at all fairly kept by Mr. Sterne's angels and his clerks."

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\* "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas."

## BRIMSTONE BETTER THAN MUD

That is the record of 1872, wanting the diary which may or may not be in existence.

Fortunately the diary for 1873, the last complete year of Shirley's life, has come to hand, and, with the letters, affords a very complete history of his last activities.

Here are a few of the names casually mentioned in passages which do not call for extended quotation:—

St. John Mivart; Holman Hunt; Dean Hole: ["who urges me to collect my miscellanea"]; Frances P. Cobbe: ["so fat and merry, but a strong-minded woman"]; German Reed: ["asked me to dine with him and Anderson, the actor—not too lively an idea, but we'll see"]; Haweis: ["who had sent me a pamphlet about unfermented sacramental wine"]; Charles Knight: ["a good man who did very good work; it is an honour to have been his friend"]; Mrs. Bateman: ["who says the weather makes her not afraid of death, for brimstone, to which she knows she ought to go, is not so bad as mud;"]; Leland: ["who told someone, who told Shirley Brooks, that he considered him (S. B.) the most agreeable man he had met in England"]; Val Prinsep: ["who told me the reporter sent to see his (swine) picture had never heard of the 'Gaderenes,' and made him spell the word"]; Burnand: ["read his new story in Macmillan, 'My Time'—I like it and wrote and told him so"]; Edmund Yates: ["to whom I have hitherto given a wide berth, as I think he owes me some acknowledgment for making use of my H(ouse) of C(ommons) article in the *Q(arterly) R(eview)* for his most successful lecture"]; some Americans: ["how clever and yet how ignorant these Yankees are!"]; Palgrave Simpson: ["who has been hurting himself by a fall in a Swiss mountain.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

“Anthony Trollope was one of the guests last night. He roars more than ever since Australia. He was exceedingly jolly and Billy Russell was opposite to him, so they fired away good stories. When they were at cards we heard Anthony’s thunder, and then a wild Banshee cry from the Irishman, till we threatened them with the police. Then Anthony said we were conventional tyrants, and Russell said in a weeping voice that Ireland was accustomed to be trampled on.”

“*Jan. 4th.* (Diary.)

“Trollope most laudatory of me (to me privately) touching my verses and the like, and urgent that I should ‘proclaim’ myself much more. ’Tis not my way, but the advice was good.”

“*Jan. 8th.*

“Proofs, *I.L.N.* The new series of my notes to be called ‘By the Way.’ This is a trifle, about which I care nought. We dined again at B. St. Small party. W. Agnew, W. B., F. S., Kiki, Sambourne, J. T., S. B., and hard work to get a cut—at last I hit on one which was much approved, but it is the deuce and all to have no helpers—told W. B. so, and that the dinner was really useless.\*

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and vulgarly flippant at dinner last night. My dear boy, you grieved me. Surely you had not been taking—no you could not be so—how was it?’

“*Filius.* ‘My dear father, it shall never happen again. I am heartily sorry. Drinking? No. The fact is, I had looked in here, and the only paper disengaged—it always is—was the *S . . . . .y Review*. I read too much of it. I am quite ashamed.’

“(They shake hands and exeunt.)”

\* This need not, I think, be taken too seriously. There is no question, indeed it is obvious from a dozen extracts given, that Shirley much valued the co-operation of his colleagues.

## WAS LOUIS NAPOLEON A VILLAIN ?

“ *Jan. 9th.*

“ To-day is marked by an event, namely the DEATH OF THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON. He had undergone two operations, and was supposed to be going on well. But he suddenly succumbed, and expired at 11.45 a.m. We heard the street newspaper men bawling about 4, and E. bought the *Globe*, and brought me the news. I was writing the *H.N.* in the above sense, and had to reconstruct my article. I need not here make any remark, having printed all I had to say. Wrote T. Taylor to give me a few verses. I hope he will do them well. I think I saw the Emperor only once, at the Opera, from Arcedekné’s box, on the State visit. But I have seen him in Paris.

“ ‘ They shall not say I have not had the crown :  
I was not fool as well as villain.’

Villain, however, he was not. But he knew the French, and said that “ they could be ridden only with spurs.” But as he grew old, his life told on him, and on his head. However, it was not he who brought on the war that prostrated France.”

“ *Jan. 10th.*

“ Wrote a lot of small things for *Punch*—these are valuable, as lightening it, and I wish I could find somebody else with a facile pen to do them for me.”

“ *Jan. 11th.*

“ Editing. Somewhat exercised with T. T.’s verses on the Emperor, but succeeded in smoothing them.\* He has capital ideas, and words, but a bad ear. . . .

“ . . . The Rev. — asks me for a ‘ big box ’ for

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\* *Vide Punch*, Jan. 18th, p. 23.



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

a pantomime for his choir! MM. the priests are cool—in *this* world. Wrote him next day that I *could* not do it.”

“ *Jan. 15th.*

“ When I got to my *P.* letters at the office, found a very nice letter from Rego, dated 9th (in an envelope of my own direction), asking me about his going to Oxford, and representing that the expense would be only some £50 more than at present. He submits to my wish, but urges his own to go. I ought to have had this on Saturday, but it had not come up to my leaving. I had therefore written him twice without reference to it. Wrote, next day, as kindly as I could, and ‘ saying I had promised he should go to Oxford, that I never willingly broke my promise to any of ‘ my 3,’ that I thought it good for him to go, that I never thought of expense when his and C.’s welfare was concerned, that all I could give them was a first-rate education, and that if I had health and strength, he should go through the University. Also I suggested his looking to his pen and style as means to an end.”

“ *Jan. 21st.*

“ At 7 to Raleigh Club, to d. with Christie. The new premises are capital, and he has a delightful lodgment up aloft. A good little dinner and one magnum of excellent champagne. Then upstairs for smoke and chat, and altogether as agreeable an evening as I have had lately. This club is much addicted to gambling—at a game they call pool *ecarté*, heaps of gold pass, and a man was utterly cleaned out the other day and had to retire. The committee try to fight this, but the men are rebellious and want to turn out the committee and have one ‘ more in accordance with the spirit of the club.’ I saw so many pleasant looking *young* fellows about that I was sorry to hear of this—

## CECIL'S SIMPLICITY OF SELFISHNESS

old club cynics may squander and plunder one another to their hearts' content."

' *Jan. 23rd.*

" Heard of a dreadful thing last night at 11—an emigrant ship for Australia, the *Northfleet*, lying at anchor off Dungeness, was cut down by a steamer, which then went off without offering aid, and some 300 were drowned, as was the Captain, Knowles, who behaved nobly.\* A fearful scene of fight for boats, not like that *Birkenhead*, in Feb., 1852, of which I can never speak without *proud* tears in my eyes."

' *Jan. 24th.*

" Cecil does not approve of the proposed visit to him [at school], 'as it will spoil the excitement of the autumn.' There is a *simplicity* of selfishness here which almost atones for itself."

In January bad news had been received from Heidelberg, where Reginald was now studying, and Mrs. Brooks had hurried off to her son's bedside. Every page of the diary breathes of distress and anxiety. Every day Shirley holds himself in readiness to join her.

On *Feb. 1st* he writes :—

" Home, to find a sad letter from E., who has consulted Prof. Freidreich, who says 'Mentone' and at once. I dare not *think* what this seems to mean. E. begs me not to give way, but to 'keep strong for all their sakes.' I shall set down very little about *feelings*—no chance of forgetting *them*, but, for a moment only, passing from *him* I tremble for her. Thanked Rosie for her children's prayers."

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\* The steamer which left the sinking ship was the Spanish vessel, *Murillo*. She was captured near Dover in the following September, and condemned by the Court of Admiralty to be sold.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

" Feb. 5th.

" A note from E. when I got home. She thinks of a halt at Geneva, and I think the plan a good one. ' Prays, and will not believe that one so good and clever and young should be taken.' No, and I told her next day to drive away such thoughts ' as Abraham did the birds.' On *this* I heard Waldo Sibthorpe preach at S. John's, Bedford Row, I suppose 35 years ago. (Bread on the waters.)"

By degrees the bulletins grew better, but Shirley's nerves were on edge.

" Got what the women call a ' turn,' a four-wheeled cab drove up, with a load of luggage, and a small gloved hand indicated to the man that he had gone too far—to No. 7—and he was to turn. I wish it *had* been hers—that's all."

After two months of loneliness he writes :—

" Dismally dull, but I have now news of a cheerful sort. *D.G.*"

And four days later :—

" Went to bed ; read ; and was putting out light, when there was a knock at my door, and the next moment *Emily and Rego were at my bedside*. They had decided on coming by Folkestone, and had sent telegram to Alderman to get supper. She had taken herself out and Wilson did not bring the telegram to me, all most vexing. Up in 5 minutes, and down, and Torie's eggs made them something of a supper. Too late to get aught else, and so we sat till 1, and Rego and I had a cigar together. He looks well, and has grown very handsome and manly, but poor dear E. is

## ANXIETY FOR REGINALD

quite knocked up, and painfully afflicted otherwise. But *that* we'll hope to set right. I *did* thank God for their safe arrival."

S. B. TO REV. JOHN OAKLEY.

" 6 KENT TERRACE,

" REGENT'S PARK,

" Feb. 11th, 1873.

" MY DEAR MR. OAKLEY,

" Your note of to-day has just been delivered to me. Alas, we have been in trouble. I will not say that we *are*, for I *hope* that we have turned all corners. My elder boy, about 17, was at Heidelberg, preparing for Oxford, and about 3 weeks ago his mother was telegraphed for, in consequence of his dangerous illness. She went off, one horrible Sunday morning, in the dark and rain, and has been with him ever since. He is out of all danger, but eminent doctors have ordered him south, and south the two are going. I heard from Mrs. Brooks this morning, from *Basle*, on her way to *Mentone* with him, *viâ* Geneva. When she will return, I know not. It was so clearly a duty to go, and equally so is it a duty to stay with him, that I cannot say a word, and I am too grateful for his escape to say one, but my house is left unto me desolate.

" Had things been different, we should have enjoyed coming to your Carnival, and have heartily thanked you for the opportunity. But, as they are, I am not in any case for being happy, or trying to make anybody else so, and I must reluctantly ask you to let me decline an invitation I should have otherwise have gladly accepted.

" I also greatly regret that my wife's absence will deprive her of the pleasure of making Mrs. Oakley's acquaintance, but this is, I trust, only a pleasure

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

postponed. I much regret not to hear a better account of your father.

“ Will you remember me very kindly to Miss Oakley and

“ Believe me very faithfully yours,

“ SHIRLEY BROOKS.”

S. B. TO PERCIVAL LEIGH.

“ *Quinquagesima Sunday,*

“ *Feb. 23rd, 1873.*”

“ MY DEAR LEIGH,

“ Will you kindly take up the subject of the *under-payment* of our excellent Police Magistrates, and give me  $\frac{1}{2}$  or  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a column on it? I think, considering the work they do, that they are unjustly treated, and the salaries were fixed 35 years ago by Sir R. Peel, Joe Hume, and others, and £1,200 a year, *less Income Tax* in 1873, is a very different thing from £1,200 a year and no such tax in 1830. They keep London quiet for us at an annual cost considerably under £20,000; they ought at least to be paid as well as County Court judges, and if a magistrate does his work conscientiously (as they certainly do) he is able or inclined to do nothing else. They *may* not, indeed, practise.\*

“ Here is the letter from my old friend (whose wife admired Lord Melbourne,) and I think it is just a case for your irony. I know the magistrates like *Punch*, and I would gladly do them a good and just turn. *False economy* is the vice of the day.

“ Ever your affectionate

“ EDITOR.

“ P. Leigh, Esq.”

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\* This resulted in “ Our Great Underpaid,” *Punch*, March 15th, p. 105.

## UNDERPAYMENT OF POLICE MAGISTRATES

S. B. TO MRS. (LADY) HARDMAN.

" 6 TANAI8 TERRACE,

" SIBERIA,

" 25th Feb., '73.

" MY DEAR MRS. HARDMAN,

" Many thanks for your kind invitation. But alas!

" 'The (Jewish) Sabbath smiles no holiday for 'im.'

Saturday evening is one on which I am doomed to the kuss of labour up to 8 o'clock. I am obliged to *debar* myself (like Edwin James\*) from all pleasures until I have seen *P.* safely thro' the printers' hands.

" But why talk we of hospitalities—hospitality is the word for the time. Is not this weather horrid?

" 'Lo, where Mæotis sleeps, and hardly flows  
The freezing Tanais thro' a waste of snows."

(his favourite lines, by the way, they say). If we were wise we should shut all our shutters, and not look out any more till somebody came to say that the primroses were about. I got forth to dine yesterday—no vehicles here—but I put on a huge pair of shooting boots (not that I shoot) and stamped away thro' the snow. Rather a good effect was caused by my changing boots in the hall, while ladies came in, and looked on admiringly.

" I have a letter dated Friday—still from Geneva, but I suppose my swallows flying south are at Turin by this time. Reginald is doing very well indeed, thank you much. I am a hermit, and am getting into the habit of not speaking—I shall be distinguished when the Scandinavian end of the world comes, and the 'Dynasty of Silence' shall be established. Kindest regards to my brother editor. I was out somewhere last week, and met one of his slaves of the lamp—I

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\* Edwin James had been debarred for unprofessional conduct.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

think he was called a green baker or thereabouts—a very agreeable man. “ Ever yours faithfully,  
“ Mrs. Hardman.” “ SHIRLEY BROOKS.

But during these two months of separation he had of course been hard at work, and life had gone on, as life has to go on, as though there are no tragedies nor anxieties below the surface.

“ Feb. 10th.

“ Charles Reade has sued the *Advertiser* for calling ‘ Shilly Shally ’ (his play on Trollope’s novel) indecent, and has got £200. He had a chance, and used it, of saying some hard and true things about the critics. One, the *Times* man, of course not Oxenford, he called a ‘ little scrub,’ and he had a pleasant word for Clement Scott.”

“ Feb. 18th.

“ Dined at H(eather) Biggs, a curious and pleasant party. It was made for Miss Florence Lees, an interesting young lady, just arrived. She has given herself to the Miss Nightingale sort of work, and was with the German ambulances in the War, is something in the same way at Hâvre, and is going to America to study their nursing system. Yet, as I told her, she seems just the woman to do nursing of another kind and be very happy. If H. W. were handsome and clever, she would be somewhat like this girl. Took her down—by the way, she has pretty eyes. Said she had wanted to meet me. Had seen an autograph letter of mine to some child, with bad spelling and small ‘ i’s ’—I don’t know what this could be. Inclined to swear eternal friendship with her, but didn’t.”

“ March 3rd.

“ Alderman\* has broken the little coloured glass bell

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\* The maid.

## “ FUN ” VERSUS “ PUNCH ”

that stood on sideboard. I don't think it was of much account, but, on matter of principle, I stormed. Considering I myself smashed a gas-globe in my bedroom the other night, I suppose one ought to be merciful, but it won't *do*.”

“ *March 4th.*

“ Papers choked with opening of debate on the Bill for turning Irish clowns into undergraduates.\* I wish they were turned into swine, who should run violently, etc.”

“ *March 5th.*

“ We had unusually hard work to shape the cut, which we had resolved should be about Plimsoll and the shipowners who send rotten ships to sea for the sake of assurance. The difficulty was that in *Fun* there was a coarse and brutal thing on the subject, which Tenniel thought debarred him from using a *skeleton*, wanted by us. I should have utterly ignored the rubbish, and T. would have effaced it by his own cut, but as he had a feeling about it we were obliged to invent a sentimental treatment. Not altogether satisfied, but I daresay he'll do a good thing.† Drank Kiki his b.d. to-morrow.”

“ *March 6th.*

“ Wrote Kiki a kindly meant note on his b.-d., and

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\* The Irish Education Bill. Gladstone was eventually beaten by three in a House of 571.

† The result was not very satisfactory, and *Fun* for once scored off its venerable rival. Plimsoll had startled the country by declaring that out of the 2,700 lives lost at sea annually by the Mercantile Marine, four-fifths were needlessly thrown away. He found cases of seamen sentenced to prison because they refused to sail in crazy ships which, when they put to sea, never touched a port but went down in mid-ocean. Eventually, through his exertions, though not without violent opposition, the Merchant Shipping Bill was passed.



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

told him that his talents had been much vindicated this year, through what had seemed a discouragement (I meant his being obliged to draw large, and have the work reduced, for the wood, by photography)—I think he'll be pleased—he is sensitive, *but* very affectionate—why *but*? Well, easily put out—yet we have never had a disagreeable word. I remember, before he regularly joined, M. L. gave him something of mine to illustrate, a 'relic clock,' some Papist tomfoolery of the Q. of Spain, I think, and I thought the idea frittered in the picture, and had some of the detail cut out. M. L. said he was 'cocky.' As a *young* fellow with brain should be. I hate your Blifils. He got my letter in the evening, and instantly returned a picture of himself, holding the said letter, and pointing to a likeness of me, in his heart, inscribed '*Cor Cordium*' and below 'Enshrined.'"

" *March 7th.*

"Lord Chamberlain has stopped a piece at the 'Court' Theatre, by Labouchere, in which Gladstone, Lowe and Ayrton are introduced. . . . (Later it was sanctioned, but with emasculation.) . . . \*

"Mr. G., my Irish contributor, had called, and graciously announced his intention to call again at 10.30. Wanted my weed, or would have gone to bed. He did not come till 11, but to make up, he stayed till past 12—I gave him liquid, of course. And all he wanted was to know whether he should write something furious about the Lord Chamberlain's 'tyranny' above mentioned. This means that he is in a public office, and the manager of the 'Court' is in another, so I suppose there's *camaraderie*. However, I would have none of that, but was very civil to him; rather liked him."

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\* I think Shirley must have been referring to "The Happy Lord," which was not by Mr. Labouchere, but by Robert Reece.

## TOOLE'S DELIGHTFUL TOMFOOLERY

" *March 15th.*

" Whitefriars. After work, went to morning performance at the Gaiety. It was to see Toole, in a piece in which he introduces real and mock juggling. Utter tomfoolery, but some of it made me roar, from its absolute idiotcy, as when he blows out a candle, and begs the spectators not to regard this as a common feat, for it has been the study of a life. He saw me, and in the course of the business he produced from a hat a copy of *Punch*, which he must have sent for, and presented it. 'This may have interest for *you*, Sir.' I felt like a great boy all thro', but I don't know why one shouldn't laugh.

" . . . Note, never be in a hurry to abuse a person for stupidity. I blew up an apparently stupid, but really good and willing boy at the hotel, and then learnt from Liz that he is deaf. I must make it up to him; luckily there is one way of doing this with the lower order. But remember, however.

" Got new Bankers' book. The old one, which has been in use since May, 1867, shows credit to about £8,600, but I have earned much that did not go thro' G.'s. New one does not *open* with a balance, but there is one, besides much due to me elsewhere, so *that's* not worth noting. *D.G.*"

S. B. TO GEORGE DU MAURIER.

" 6 KENT TERRACE,

" REGENT'S PARK,

" N.W.

" *S. Patrick's Day in the afternoon,*

" (*March 17th*), 1873.

" MY DEAR KIKI,

" I don't write to ask for news, because I know that if there were any I should have heard. 'Then,' says you, 'what *do* you write for?' Well, just to say

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

I trust all is going on as well as can be in the circumstances. And also to say that I think your 'kitten cut' is one of the very best you have ever done. I have shown it to a few of the judgmental sort, and they are enthusiastic. Whether C. K. is equally enchanted with his portrait, has to be heard—he ought to be.\*

"I suppose we shall hardly see you on Wednesday, unless —. Your health, and that of your entire household, actual and possible, were duly remembered last dinner, and will be again.

"I dined last night at Trübner's, to meet Leland *et ux*, on their return from Cairo. He told many stories, but for quiet fun, of the American sort, I think this good. A man out in some black State used to come among his friends, every morning, in a *fresh* rage, about some grievance or scandal of 40 years back, and this he talked about all day, a new one coming on the next. It turned out that he had found a lot of his father's old diaries, and every night worked himself up with narratives the old man had compiled years and years back. 'Tis an odd notion that only an American would have thought of. I don't know that it may even seem funny to you, but I fancy I see it worked out by an actor like poor Jeffreson.

"I've now had no news since Tuesday, but it is not impossible that my folks may have gone to Rome. I circular-noted them with the means, should they be so inclined, and Florence, whence they last wrote, is no great railway distance.

"I actually went to see Toole in his farce of mock magic, on Saturday afternoon. I was near, and in the course of performance he pulled a *Punch* out of an

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\* *Vide* "Scenes of Club Life," *Punch*, March 22nd, p. 117, with an excellent portrait of Keene in the right-hand corner.

CHARLES KINGSLEY

*empty* hat, and handed it to me. 'This may have interest for *you*, Sir,' he said respectfully and gravely. 'Tis wild fooling, but I laughed; he blew out a candle, and then begged the audience not to regard this as a common feat, 'it had been the study of a life.'

"Kindest regards to Mrs. du Maurier.

"Ever yours,

"Kiki, Esq."

"S. B.

"*March 25th.* (Diary.)

"To Crowdy's to d. to meet, first time, Canon Kingsley; very delightful—very like Gladstone. His stammer not much at dinner, but in the evening when he naturally sought to speak more eagerly, it was marked. Says he has made himself a voice—speaks from his lower depths, and holds his upper lip tightly down, working with the under one—so does the Bishop of Winchester. Has abandoned his pretty house at Eversley, and gone to Harrow, where a son is at school. . . . I was going about 11 but as he could not go to his train till near 12, he told me 'not, on the first meeting, to lower myself in his opinion by keeping good hours.' So I stayed, and smoked more. He is always smoking a pipe, he says. He knows Trinidad well, and seemed to know the name of Walkinshaw."

S. B. TO MISS MATTHEWS.

"*5th April, 1873.*

". . . I saw Wills (Charles I) last night. He is rehearsing 'Eugene Aram!' I don't like the subject and told him not to expect another great success. To sweeten this, I made him a present of a long-cherished idea of mine for a play, and it pleased him much. I don't think he had ever heard of the man. However, I told him where to get information. It is *John Law*, the picturesque Scot, duellist, lady killer,

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

“ *April 12th.*

“ Was called on by Mr. Redpath and Mr. Nast, Americans.\* Told them I could not go to America, having no man to me what I was to M. Lemon, but some day I hoped to do so. R. said I should be very well received, and that my name was very well known. Told me E. Y. had been a failure as a lecturer, and that my lecture† had been the one ‘ that held him up.’ ”

“ *April 21st.*

“ Miss Emily Leith has helped me into a mull. She sent me some things of her own some time back, and with them some very good nonsense verses in MS., which I also took to be hers, but which she says she told me were copied. If she did, I overlooked the statement, and having touched them up, used them this week, as they fitted a cut of Sambourne’s. Such things will happen, but I don’t do them often, usually eschewing outsiders.”

“ *April 26th.*

“ I inserted some verse sent me by Emily Leith, overlooking her distinct statement that she had copied them. So down come letters from Gilbert, who wrote them in *Fun* 10 years ago, Tom Hood and Burnand. Made the *amende* and wrote Gilbert. *Mea culpa*, and nobody else’s.‡

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\* Asking him to go on a lecturing tour in America.

† Edmund Yates’s lecture, fashioned out of Shirley’s *Quarterly Review* article without Shirley’s sanction.

‡ *Vide Punch*, April 26th, p. 176. The first verse ran :—

“ Sing for the garish eye,  
When the moonless brandlings cling !  
Let the froddering crooner cry  
And the braddled sapster sing,

## AN EDITORIAL BUNGLE

S. B. TO MISS FERGUSSON.

" 6 KENT TERRACE,  
" REGENT'S PARK,  
" N.W.  
" 29th April, 1873.

" MY DEAR KATE,

" I am much too proud of the beautiful cap to express my feelings properly as yet, but I hope to do so when we meet, and when I have toned myself down a little. When we laughed about presents, at that delightful dinner at your house, I certainly never thought seriously of inviting you to take so much trouble, but the cap is so charming that I quite forgive myself. My household esteem me much more highly than they did, and I bear myself haughtily. All thanks to you.

" . . . Do you see that Macready is gone ? \* 80. He retired in 1851, so I suppose that you never saw him—he was hardly the actor that a very young child would be taken to see—(I assume the *possibility only* because you told me a date.) But ask Sir William about him, and his *Macbeth*. Curiously, I *meant* to see him play *Richard III*, which he seldom did, but this performance was fixed for one of my birthdays years and years back, and my mother had a dinner in my honour, so I could not go. But *that* night Macready

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For, never and never again  
Will the tottering beechlings play,  
For bratticed wrackers are singing aloud,  
And the throngers croon in May ! "

Fortunately the verses had been given flattering prominence on their own merit, and this fact doubtless made it the easier for [Sir] W. S. Gilbert to forgive when *Punch* hastened in his next number to confess " Blunderavi."

\* He died April 27th.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

was so enraged with Alfred Bunn, the manager of Drury Lane, for letting him play only 3 acts, and those the weakest, that after the curtain fell, he ran into Bunn's room, and knocked him over, chair and all. I think he had to pay £100 or so for this levity. I used to meet him at C. Dickens's. He was the best *tragedian* I ever saw, and yet far from being all one wanted.

"It seems a trifle warmer to-day, but the cowl on my chimney howls, I suppose in indignation at the E. wind. I have been howling at it for a month or more, but it does no good.

"Believe me, my dear Kate,

"Yours most faithfully,

"SHIRLEY BROOKS.

"Miss Kate Fergusson."

S. B. TO MISS MATTHEWS.

"29th April, 1873.

". . . Do you see that Macready died on Sunday? I think I saw him in all his great parts. His *power* was tremendous—his delivery people differed about—he liked to speak his syllables in a detached way, yet he could be very musical at times as in *Prospero*, but I must write some recollections of him, so I will not give you fractional instalments."

DITTO TO DITTO.

"May 4th, 1873.

". . . . I fear the 'Hamlet' is a mess. I could not go, having to attend Committee at 'Garrick' to see that Tenniel was elected, as, of course, he instantly was, but I never run a risk where a friend is concerned. I hear *Hamlet* himself was very bad. What idiotic speeches they made at the Academy dinner. Even Granville, who is usually happy, broke into rubbish under the influence of the circumambient drivel. However, the speeches are good enough for the show."

## PROTEST AGAINST STAGE INDECENCIES

" *May 3rd.* (Diary.)

" Committee 'G.'\* We had some talk, in reference to certain blackballing, and most of us thought that we owed it to one another to give a hint when a blackball was deserved. Trollope thought not, and in strictness he is right, but we ought to be able to be confidential. When Tenniel's name was read, there was a general cry that we 'did not need to hear anything about *him*.' He was, of course, unanimously elected. Wrote and told him."

On May 7th the following letter appeared in the *Times* over the transparent initials K. T. R. P. :—

" ' VOX PARENTIS.' "

" To the Editor of the *Times*.

" SIR,—Your theatrical critic writes thoughtfully, and as becomes a gentleman, and therefore I ask leave to offer a word in answer to his deftly turned sarcasm on those who think it 'wicked' to go to a 'theatre.' May I vindicate my own common sense by saying that an adequate performance of one of the great plays of Shakespeare, or of another true dramatist, is an intellectual pleasure which I am most glad, when permitted, to take in company with my children? But I happen to be one of the people called Christians, and I am also in possession of the use of my eyes. I see in every picture-shop window photographs which show me the real 'attractions' of the 'theatres,' and I see in the managerial puffs the names of the originals of the photographs. Also, Sir, I have witnessed several of the performances in which these persons exhibit themselves, and I do not know whether the eye is more offended at the elaborate indecency than the ear is insulted by the vulgar elocution. Such representations

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\* Garrick Club.



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

are artistically as much beneath contempt as morally suggestive of compassion for the performers, not to speak of some indignation that educated and responsible people should sanction such exhibitions. Therefore, I refuse to take my children to a 'theatre' while it is a shop for the display of ignorance and immorality. To this definition there are two or three exceptions, which I am happy to recognize, and I only wish that at the exceptional establishments the literary standard were higher. I, for one, am very grateful to Mr. Tom Taylor for his effort in favour of the nobler drama, and I wish him all success. Your critic (if I may again remark on his article) appears to me to have judged Saturday's performance\* most fairly, but it was impossible not to see that over-fatigue and nervousness were hindering several of the actors.

"Your obedient servant,

"K. T. R. P.

"May 5th."

"June 1st.

"Mrs. Ross Church said that the spirit of W. M. Thackeray had appeared to her, and told her not to work too hard. If we remember things of this world, elsewhere, I should like to ask him about this, but we shall, I trust, have better things to discuss."

"June 6th.

"This came into my head, but certainly with no cynical feeling, as I was going to bed to-night.

"Cynical Thought.

"A Man is never so Old in the outside world as he is made to feel when in the bosom of his family."

"June 9th.

"Wrote Low that *Punch* was going to d. at the Alexandra, and that I would report on the *cuisine*.

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\* "Hamlet."

## BURNING OF ALEXANDRA PALACE

But—*l'homme propose*—this day, just before one, a beast of a plumber set fire to the Alexandra Palace, and in a very short time it was utterly destroyed. Bad supply of water. Am rather sorry I did not go and see the place. It is to be rebuilt, we are told.”

“ June 10th.

“ Papers, of course, full of the Alexandra catastrophe. Just the same carelessness that nearly destroyed Canterbury Cathedral. The lower orders are raging at the present Master and Servant law, which lets the latter be imprisoned, as he has no money. But I think that in a case of brutal carelessness, like the two above cases, the offence should be felony. There would be fewer fires if a sullen, stupid ruffian or so were sent to penal servitude.”

“ June 11th.

“ Great trouble over cut, as it has to be about the Shah.\* A new actress is coming out ; she is a mistress of—the artist. T. T. declares there has been nothing like her since Siddons, but he is lavish in praise of those he likes. Not educated. And as she is a Magdalen, only not repentant, she will not be taken into drawing-rooms and made a fool of, like some of 'em. Called for E. at Mrs. Y.'s. Mrs. Boucicault said I was looking quite young. This is the only humbug good with men who know they are old.”

“ June 18th.

“ Rain in the night. Day of the Persian Shah's arrival—one hears his name till one is ready to d.

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\* The Shah had been entertained lavishly at St. Petersburg, before coming to London, and was supposed to be wavering between Russia and England. Sir John Tenniel's cartoon, “ Feline Friends,” was a highly successful representation of the position of affairs, full of suggestion and at the same time a delightful decoration of the page.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

whose trouble he ascribed to wind and 'enlarged' (I think) liver. Hence the *fol. argent*, a delicacy the Doctors don't think of in my case.

"I dined 'with bishops and archbishops and all the company of Heaven' on Saturday. The dinner was beautiful, and we had plenty of elbow room, and that admirable waiting, by assiduous but not bustling menials, which the City understands. The speaking was not particularly good (how could it be?), but the Primate made a good retort about Zadkiel. But *the* speech, high comedy, was Dr. Wilberforce's, which is not reported.

"This weather feels like summer, though it does not look like it. But after Saturday the days begin to shorten again!

"I say! We quite forgot, when making the Cat, that the *young* Russian Bear is to be *here* with the Cat! We shall be charged with inhospitality. *Mea culpa*, but I don't feel much afflicted.\*

"Do you know how to estimate the difference between the *Farhenhiet* (spelt wrong) and Reaumur thermometers? A lady has brought me a very pretty paper-weight from Salzburg, with a thermometer inserted, but of course with the R. scale. But, I suppose I can find out in the Cyclopædia. Don't take any trouble.

"I suppose we shall meet at the 4.8 train on Wednesday, unless you go by the river.

"Ever, my dear Leigh,

"Yours faithfully,

"S. B.

"P. L., Esq."

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\* In the cartoon, "Feline Friends," the Russian Bear is represented chained to a rock and raging at the friendship of the British Lion and the Persian Cat.

## A SCRIPTURAL MISTAKE

“ June 30th.

“ Heard from Kiki whom I had chaffed about a blunder touching Pharaoh’s daughter hiding Moses (with a stick, see cut), but he sends me Lord Wharncliffe’s letter, showing that *he* made the mistake.”\*

“ July 1st.

“ Got out a good strong Church cut—my invention and my title, the latter much admired.”†

“ July 6th. (Staying at Gadshill with Charles Dickens, the younger.)

“ C. D. drove us to Cobham, where I had never been. First, church, and curious almshouse quadrangle—then to the Park, and E., I, and Marley were to walk across, and be picked up at the other side. M. said she knew the way, and C. said that if she did not she deserved to be smacked. We went off, and the walk was lovely—glorious trees, fine old Elizabethan house. Hideous mausoleum—never consecrated‡ Then, at the next turning, it was made clear that poor M. deserved the said smacking. We went wrong. She

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\* Pharaoh’s daughter, of course, *found* Moses. Fortunately, Shirley was just in time and Moses’s mother was substituted :—

“ Uncle. ‘ Now, how did the *Mother of Moses* hide him ? ’

“ Niece. ‘ With a stick, Uncle. ’ ”

—*Punch*, July 5th, 1873.

† The title was “ The ‘ Liberation ’ Society,” and the cartoon represented the two Archbishops considering the petition of 480 Church of England priests in favour of Auricular Confession, whilst they trample under foot an Anti-Ritualistic rejoinder. Edward Miall, the editor of the *Nonconformist*, *loquitur*,

“ Delighted, your Graces, to find you so earnestly co-operating with me for the destruction of the State Church ! ! ”

‡ Louis Napoleon’s burial place. His remains were afterwards removed to Farnborough.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

did all she could, and ran about heroically. At length we got out by Wright's farm, but no carriage. Then I was in a way, for my brevity of breath cut me like a knife. The ladies walked on in search of carriage, and I lingered, walked a little, suffered a deal, and was enraged with everything, especially a d. dove that would coo when I was ready to kuss—parodied Burns 'How can ye coo, ye cursed doo, When I'm so hot, and scarce can swear.' Finally, the carriage came up, they had waited a long while, and then supposed we had gone to Strood. Home and a welcome glass of sherry. D. at 6. Soon got right, but this brevity is distressing."

" *July 12th.*

"Whitefriars. Mrs. Church\* there. After their business, I brought her upstairs, gave her sherry, and she stayed an hour talking about spiritualism. It is odd—here is a spirited, clever woman of business, who says she and her children incessantly talk to spirits, with some of whom they are on terms of banter, specially with one called 'Charley.' I asked her to let me have an interview, quietly, with only herself and girls, and she promises this, and offers to try and get me a familiar all for myself."

" *July 15th.*

"Got at a cut about the Duke of Edinburgh's marriage—I suggested the fiddle and the verse."†

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\* Florence Marryat, the novelist.

† "The Old, Old Tune—Prince Alfred would a-wooing go!"

"There came a fiddler here to play,  
And O, but he was jimp and gay,  
He stole the lassie's heart away,  
And made it all his ain, O,"

Referring, of course, to the Duke's excellent violin-playing.

## AN UNSEEMLY WRANGLE IN THE "LORDS"

" July 23rd.

" Thought of a good Pope couplet, in case anyone should be too gushing about the Bishop—\*

" ' And nobly wild, with Budgell's† fire and force,  
Paint angels trembling round his falling horse.' "

Sent it to Crowdy. On Monday night the Lords did not have much about the Bishop or Lord Westbury, being eager for a fray between two of the descendants of Charles II's mistresses, la Querouaille and Nell Gwynn, D. of Richmond and D. of S. Albans." ‡

" July 25th.

" A man called L. has called several times. After other efforts to see me, he wrote, and is evidently cracked—says I am spying upon him and using his ideas for *Punch*. Wrote him that I never heard of him, but if he'll put his grievance into writing, I will refer it to my solicitor."

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\* Bishop Wilberforce had been killed by a fall from his horse on the preceding Saturday, and the ex-Lord Chancellor had died on the Sunday.

† Eustace Budgell, a kinsman of Addison's, who could be as unctuous as he usually was cynical.

‡ The Duke of St. Albans, the descendant of Nell Gwynn and Charles II, had recently rather indiscreetly referred in an after-dinner speech to the fact that the Queen had been educated, politically, by Lord Melbourne, and expressed satisfaction that Her Majesty had always been a Liberal. The Duke of Richmond, the descendant of Louise de la Querouaille and the same monarch, had hauled his distant "relative" over the coals for this, demanding what he meant by claiming the Queen as a political partisan. The Duke of St. Albans thereupon replied with some spirit, quoting an anecdote about a fool. "The Duke of Richmond left it to their lordships to decide whether he were a Fool or not," says the "Essence of Parliament," "but no division was taken upon this question!" Altogether the wrangle was a very unseemly one and did not redound to the dignity of the House of Lords.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

" July 27th.

" A piece called the ' Marble Maiden ' being announced, my diary helped me to a date which I sent to the *Era* critic, Blanchard, and to-day this was the result :—

" " The author is Mr. G. M. Layton, for whose gratification, or the reverse, we may say that he has not hit upon an original title, seeing that a little piece from the pen of Mr. J. H. Stocqueler, called ' The Marble Maiden,' was produced at the Lyceum by the Keeleys, in 1846, for the *début* of the late Miss Laidlaw.' "

About this time I find Shirley Brooks supporting John Hollingshead in his agitation for Copyright Reform as affecting the Right of Stage Representation of novels—a reform which justice demanded then, just as justice demands it now, but which seems as far off realization as ever. That a stranger may take my novel, and throw it into dramatic form, however roughly, is a scandal as crying to-day as it was thirty years ago, and we who have written fiction will echo what Shirley Brooks wrote to Hollingshead : " That dramatization question . . . is one that ought to be taken up by all of us." The nature of the scandal may be better appreciated if we take the case of Miss Braddon, who at that early date had written twenty-four novels, of which many had been dramatized but from which she had never received a pennyworth of pecuniary advantage ; or of Wilkie Collins, who wrote : " My ' Poor Miss Finch ' has been dramatized (without asking my permission) by some obscure idiot in the country. I have been asked to dramatize it but have refused because my experience tells me that the book

## “ ANYBODY COULD BE MORAL ”

is eminently *unfit* for stage purposes. What I refuse to do with my own work, another man (unknown in Literature) is perfectly free to do against my will, and (if he can get his rubbish played) to the prejudice of my novel and reputation.”

On July 21st Shirley went down to give the prizes away at Isleworth, of which place the Rev. Derwent Coleridge was at that time rector.

S. B. TO MISS MATTHEWS.

“ July 22nd, 1873.

“ Yesterday was a broil, but I got over my work pretty well, and having previously ‘crammed’ a bit from ‘Agathos’ (the late Bishop’s book) I was able to bring in an allusion to him with some success. But the real pleasure of the day (except ice) was to meet the Rev. Dr. Coleridge. This is the ‘Derwent’ of his father’s poems; he is now an elderly clergyman, very agreeable. He moved the thanks to me. It is a sort of link with the old days.

“ Last night I took up ‘Pendennis,’ and I could not lay it down; sat reading it till midnight. I am not sure that for delicate work it is not better than ‘V. Fair.’ And what delightful English he wrote! He knew this and was proud and said that Dickens might be a greater ‘moralist,’ but that he was the best grammarian, and ‘anybody could be moral!’ ”

DITTO TO DITTO.

“ Aug. 3rd, 1873.

“ Read the announcement of ‘Manfred’ (Princess’s) in *Era* advertisements. I saw it years ago. One Denvil was brought out in it but he was a duffer, and Vandenhoff afterwards took the part. The piece was beautifully got up as regards scenery, and there was



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

a scene amid the mountains when the Witch of the Alps (Ellen Tree\*) appeared and a wonderful rainbow was thrown upon her white dress. We thought it very fine *then*, but electric light has come since. Denvil couldn't understand his text. He, speaking of Heaven, said, 'Where *thou* art not, and I shall never be,' and of course should have apostrophized the soul of the woman he had 'slain,' but he addressed the words to a fat chamois-hunter, John Cooper, who, it was particularly plain, was not in Heaven, or likely to get there without a lift."

" *August 5th.* (Diary.)

"Parliament prorogued, and an odd thing. No special boat having been provided to bring the Commission from Osborne, the Houses were kept about two hours. But the papers issued the speech, and I believe I read it to E. before Lord Selborne read it to the Parliament. People to whom it was telegraphed, and most buyers of evening papers read it long before spoken, and in America it was read 9 hours before."

" *August 8th.*

"Wrote *Punch*, that is, 'Essence,' which once more I bring to a conclusion, this time with some verses—good enough."†

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\* Mrs. Charles Kean.

† Little did he think that for him the "Essence" was written for the last time, and that the last word of his as much serious as comic political history of England was penned when he wrote:—

"Away! our brave Lords; our bold Commons away!  
Bill, Motion, Committee, Debate and Address, hence!  
*Punch* rejoicing (how much 'twere uncivil to say)  
Puts his finishing rhyme to his exquisite 'Essence.'"

Lords and Commons were putting away their parliamentary puppets for a season. Shirley was putting his away for ever.

## PEERAGES FOR DOCTORS ?

" *August 9th.*

" No one had done anything on the Ministerial changes, so wrote some lines myself—find my hand has not lost its facility for rubbish of a 'lightsome' kind, and anyhow I have an ear for rhythm—so has Burnand, so have *not* some of my friends."\*

S. B. TO MISS FERGUSSON.

" 6 KENT TERRACE,  
" REGENT'S PARK,  
" N.W.

" *Monday, Aug. 11th, 1873.*

" MY DEAR KATE,

" There must be a 'sympathy' between us, as Falstaff (whom I am getting to resemble) says. Only yesterday I was speculating where I should direct to you, there being a little article in next *Punch* which 'the family' might like, and behold your letter was *en route*.† I am so glad you have got out of London, which is eminently detestable now. To-day we have some rain, but I don't think it is any cooler. The streets are quite melancholy—I don't think there is a carriage left in town. One's hansom races up Regent Street like a whirlwind, and there is nobody to run over.

" Very many thanks for your most kind remembrance of me. I first dispose of my family, by saying that we are only waiting the return of my younger boy, Cecil, from Godesberg, to act promptly. That is, Mrs. Brooks

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. \* "The Shuffle of Cards," *Punch*, Aug. 16th, p. 64.

. † The article was entitled "The Doctors' Congress." Sir William Fergusson was this year president of the British Medical Association. Shirley wrote "*Mr. Punch* will not be at all astonished by the speedy announcement that Sir W. F. and Sir J[ames] P[aget] are about to be raised to the Peerage."

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

and her two sons go to Oban, and thence into the north. I have nothing to do with their wanderings. I can't get away altogether until the 2nd week in September, but in the meantime I shall go to some sea-place (I don't know where—can you advise me?) whence I can come up twice a week. But, when released, I must go to Harrogate again, as it does me so much good, tho' it is rather a bore to go to the same place three times running. Now, Harrogate is not so far from Scotland but that I might manage to come and inflict myself on you for a few days. When I say 'inflict,' it is in no mock modesty. I know my priceless merits and value them *at least* as highly as you do, but you do not know what you propose to yourself. Your house will be full of men who shoot, or walk to the tops of mountains ten miles higher than the level of the sea, or stalk elephants, and so on. Now I have long given up the athletics, and I like to sit under a tree, and smoke, and be talked to. That's not the sort of guest you want in September. Consider these things, my dear K. H. F. You have plenty of time to do so.

"Your house looked, somehow, as if you were out of it the other day I passed it—I had been giving away the prizes at the Hanover Sq. rooms, and was going to the Westminster Club for a cigar, etc., before dinner in Regent St. (Café Royal, No. 68, very good d., by the way, to be had), and I gazed in at all your windows, and *felt* you were not there. I do not think many of our acquaintances are left here. I have seen nobody for several days, except such of my colleagues as have not absconded. 'Tis dull work. The papers are not quite so dull, however, as might be expected, thanks to Mr. Gladstone, Mrs. Hogg, the lady with the Page, Orton and Kenealy, and a few more *philanthropists*, masculine and feminine.

"I send *Punch*—excuse the copy being made of

## MR. SAMBOURNE NEARLY DROWNED

proof pages—I have not yet had it complete. The initial to the 'Essence' is very clever and the artist has shown himself in his own initial,\* doing what I suppose he is now about, viz., rowing on the Seine. I told him the Thames might have been a good enough river for him, but he said he wanted to *improve his French*—I imagine he will *hear* some that may not improve *him* if he runs up against a bargeful of Seine cads, as he is very certain to do.†

"The railway continues to furnish accidents. The fearful business at Wigan seems to produce no more care. Its result spread almost up to our door—one of the slain (Miss Nason's maid) was a girl who worked for a milliner employed by Mrs. Brooks, and has often been here. But worse things are done in America, as you will have seen—40 burned on a steamer, as they were going for their holiday.

"Sir William has been doing his work splendidly, but he *is* a model host, so that can surprise nobody. I have accepted his teaching about water, with a modification. I am not afraid of water, not I, but I always put something into it, for we are bound to use all proper means for preserving ourselves, that we may live the longer to do the more good to others, and let them profit by the example of our goodness and virtue. It is very pleasing to think that the stiffer

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\* This is literally and delightfully true (*vide Punch* April 16th, p. 62). Mr. Sambourne has not only signed his initials to his drawing, but he has *signed his portrait to his initials!*

† This proved partly prophetic, for in a later letter he writes: "Sambourne came to grief, and tho' we can laugh now it might have been bad work. The boat swamped where the Seine is very wide, and they had to save themselves by swimming; he thought it was 'all up' at one time, for he could not reach shore but got to a friendly boat."

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

one brews one's tumbler and one's Eke, the more one is obeying the dictates of religion and morality.

"With which elevated sentiments, and with kindest regards to Nelly (and I am glad she spells it *so*, and not like the young ladies whose photographs we see in windows), I end this screed, and am, my dear Kate,

"Most faithfully yours,

"SHIRLEY BROOKS."

In August Shirley managed to get away to Folkestone, where the Friths, du Maurier, (Sir Francis) Burnand and Charles Keene were already making holiday. Percival Leigh was as usual left in charge at headquarters.

S. B. TO PERCIVAL LEIGH.

"PAVILION HOTEL,

"FOLKESTONE,

"12 noon. *Wind W. Sun shining.*

"Sept. 16th, '73.

"MY DEAR LEIGH,

"The number was all right, thanks to your care. This opinion of mine you would learn from a note I asked Brightmore to forward to you.

"Touching the large cut, it seems to me that *Punch* is almost logically bound to complete the history of the war by giving something about the final Evacuation. As to its form, I think Tenniel will like to settle this for himself. You *might* make Germany (female) going out with a sort of warning: 'Now, Madam, mind I never have occasion to come again, or you will not get rid of me so easily,' and France (female), scowling proud defiance, 'Next time you come I shall be better prepared for you.' *For that is the truth of the situation.* But the idea will suggest many forms of treatment. I think that it is certainly the cut of the week, anyhow.



THIS INITIAL LETTER, CUT FROM THE PAGES OF "PUNCH" WAS FOUND PASTED IN SHIRLEY'S DIARY FOR 1873, WITH THE IDENTIFICATIONS OF THE PORTRAITS ADDED IN HIS HANDWRITING

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## THE BORE WHO QUOTES

I write to Jackides by this post to the same effect, that he may turn the matter over in his mind. Or France saying, '*Au revoir*,' and Germany saying, 'I suppose, dear madam, we are not likely to see you in Berlin soon?' France, '*Cela depend.*'

"Mere hints { '*Speed the parting Guest.*'  
{ '*The Best Enemies must part.*'  
{ '*I owe you a return visit, Madam.*'\*"

"Varied weather, but lovely air.

"Ever yours,

"S. B."

"Sept. 8th.

"Reading Mrs. Grote's '*Grote*,'† dull book, but here and there a point. Says the lower orders lost all faith in the upper, by reason of Crimean blundering. If Grote talked as Johnsonically as she makes him speak, he must have been a bore, but I don't believe it, and will ask Dr. Wm. Smith."

"Sept. 11th.

"Got £11 8s. from Dramatic Authors, for performances (some years now) of my pieces, which still yield a little, though the last must be 20 years old."

"Sept. 13th.

"In ladies' room (Pavilion Hotel, Folkestone), Mr. S., of Glasgow, claimed acquaintance, and said I had dined with him. I had forgotten it, but that being so I was obliged to talk to him, and he was the bore of my visit—telling old tales, and showing me cuttings from *P.*, etc., in a d—d little red book he carried about with him. Actually quoted to me one of my own bits. However, such things can be borne."

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\* The cut was not a great success, nor was the legend which ran:—

"AU REVOIR.

"Germany. 'Farewell, madame, and if——'

"France. 'Ha! we shall meet again!'"

† Mrs. Harriet Grote's "*Personal Life of George Grote.*"



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

Later he added the following note :—

“ Wrote as I felt, as usual. But saw his ‘ sudden death ’ in the paper late in November, and am glad I was always civil to him.”

“ *Sept. 15th.*

“ Sharpe told me a story about Carlyle and Swinburne, not so bad. S. wished to meet C. ‘ Well, I consider him a man who lives in a sewer, and contributes to it—and so tell him that, and bring him, if he likes to come.’ ”

“ *Sept. 16th.*

“ Duke of Wellington said he voted for Wife’s Sister Marriage Bill because the Duchess had a pretty sister. ‘ The Duchess will outlive you,’ said L.\* ‘ Don’t know that,’ said D., ‘ you attend her.’ . . .

“ Duke of W. (above), talking of Locock’s Pills. L. repudiated them. ‘ But they bear your name.’ ‘ Yes, and I wear Wellingtons, but I don’t call you a bootmaker.’ ”

On September 23rd he moved on to Brighton, where, notwithstanding the brass bands and “ the paint without beauty,” he stayed for a fortnight.

S. B. TO MISS FERGUSSON.

“ 33 OLD STEINE,

“ BRIGHTON,

“ 1st Oct., 1873.

“ MY DEAR KATE,

“ . . . This place is crammed, but not with nice people, who come in November. I hate the place, except for a couple of days. The very music, which never ceases, is a nuisance to me, and the crowd is an *abomination* (a spelling which makes the word stronger). But the weather is beautiful, and so is

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\* Dr. Locock.

## A GOOD "SEQUITUR"

air, and I go out fishing, as then I do not hear Enbach murdered on brass.

They have turned poor old King Turveydrop's tables at the Pavilion into a Museum, and there is a handsome room of pictures, some of them good.

The 'improve-your-mind' part also is admirable, but to be passed through with great rapidity, but there are some very curious old English china worth seeing. I saw a wonderful clock that tells you how old the moon is and when it will rain next, and how old you are without knowing my age without telling, for I was in Brighton (1827), and what you are going to have for dinner, and everything, I believe, except what o'clock it is. I saw the Aquarium is something, and I go there incessantly, and I think one of the lady lobsters knows me and winks at me. There is no amusement here, and whereas at Folkestone we are hurried off every day to see the boat come in, and insult the sick—ask the soldiers Friths if we didn't. Do you know Folkestone? So, you will agree with me that the Lees is a far longer walk than this Parade. We had 'beauty without paint' there: here we have paint without beauty.

Do you know this? I fancy it must be French.

*Widower.* "My wife is dead. *Tears will not restore*  
Therefore—I weep."

I had not seen it.

". . . Ever yours faithfully,

"SHIRLEY BROOKS."

On the day that the above letter was written the miser died, and it was, says Mr. Frith in his reminiscences," due to Shirley's advocacy in the case that the great painter was buried in St. Paul's. Again I take advantage of Mr. Frith's kindness and now a delightful letter.

SHIRLEY BROOKS

S. B. TO MR. FRITH, R.A.

" 33 OLD STEINE,

" BRIGHTON,

" Oct. 3rd, 1873.

" MY DEAR COTTLE,

" I've no note-paper, but that's a detail. I've nothing to say, and that's another. You're another. Yes, I have to say this—that the Royal Academy ought to stir themselves up, and bury Sir Edwin in S. Paul's. I wrote *that* in print *yesterday*, and it is gone to India; it was not hinted to me by the *D.T.*, as you would, of course, with your usual candour, suggest.

" We have lovely weather here—almost too hot. I shall come up on Wednesday, but the missis is enjoying it so much, that she asks for another week; so I shall go down again on Saturday. I have been reading up about this place and George IV. I remember his death well; and also that I tried my sucking muse on a sweet elegy on his demise, beginning:—

" ' And is our monarch gone, and is it so ?

O Albion, yet again thy tears must flow !'

" Fancy blubbering over Turveydrop! But if we waited to *feel* before we wrote, there wouldn't be half so much good writing as there is. ' Precious good thing, too!' says you. Apelles, stick to thy last (Apelles was not the same as Apella). They have turned the Pavilion stables into a free museum—a good many pictures, of which a few are good; and some very funny old china, besides the regular improve-your-mind business of owls, oysters, oolites, etc. The catalogue is not to be had, being in reviewing hands, or I'd send it you. Do you remember a ' Birthday Party ' of O'Neil's (?) children dancing: a good deal of *go* in it—that's one of the pictures; and another is that by A. Solomon, of the girl fainting at seeing

## BRIGHTON, A "CITY OF THE PLAIN"

her rival's negress dressed in the former's brocade. Also Millais' 'Bonny Prince Charley'—a woman sewing a cockade on.

"My dear Cottle, when I think of the pretty faces we daily saw at Folkestone, and when I walk on this parade and see every variety of *frump*—some so hideous!—I am ready to weep; and should, but for being more ready to curse at the eternal and infernal music that is going on from early morn to *Jew-ey* eve. Except in some girls' schools, there is not a pretty face in Brighton; but that is nothing. The place is full of criminal, d—able *hideousness*; and it ought to draw down heaven's wrath, for I am sure this is the City of the *Plain*.

"Ever yours faithfully,  
"S. B."

If any further proof were needed that Shirley was suggester-in-chief of subjects for the cartoons, the following letter to his deputy would be pretty conclusive. John Bright had rejoined the Ministry as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster just as the Ashantee expedition had been decided upon.

S. B. TO PERCIVAL LEIGH.

"DANBY HOUSE,  
"33 OLD STEINE,  
"BRIGHTON,  
"Oct., 1873.

"MY DEAR LEIGH,

"I suppose that the Return of John Bright to office is the topic. At least I see no other. I hope you will have a full Conclave, and hit out a cut which, while it lends itself, *etc.*, expresses, *etc.* Jackides is aware of the formulary.

"Bright (*malgré Times*) does come back to help the

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

discomfited Cabinet. Whether you will treat him as the *Friend* in Need ; or as the Fighting Quaker come back as he sniffs war ; or as our Big Brother ; or as 'time-honoured *Lancaster*' (see book), or as the new old 'maid-of-all-work,' as Dufferin called the C. of Lancaster ; or coming in with 'Verily, William, thou seemest to be in what is carnally called a jolly mess' ; or if you could apply the story of the Quaker at sea fight saying, 'He was a man of peace, but, friend Captain, if thou wert to lay this tube *this way* what a number of poor souls (Tories) thou mightest blow to — ;' or as an old coachman preparing to see whether *he* can 'drive the bus thro' Temple Bar' ; or as Achilles coming out of his sulk and shouting for battle ; or as the *Complete Angler*, instructing his pupil, William, how to throw a *catching* fly for the fat fish, John Bull ; or put the 'Three Chancellors, Gladstone, Selborne, and Bright in the middle, and something about We Three' ; or something àpropos of the Bathing Season (now on) and him as a big bathing man teaching a couple of little Ministers, and bidding them 'Strike out, like little *men*, that's the way to *swim* ;' is for the Council's high consideration. There *must* be some way of making a good bit of fun out of it. He would look well confronted with an Ashantee warrior, and regretting, in Quaker talk, that he has to knock him over, but going to do it all the same ; or, better, telling William that if the misguided man has to be taught a lesson it had better, out of kindness to the poor fellow, be done thoroughly.\*

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\* The last idea was adopted :—

“ A FRIEND IN NEED.

“ *Mr. Gladstone.* ‘ My dear John, I congratulate you ! Just in time to settle accounts with our black friend yonder.’

“ *John Bright.* ‘ H'm ! Fighting is not quite in my line, as thou knowest, friend William ; nevertheless— ! ’ ”

## THE NOTORIOUS EDWIN JAMES

“ Think away, my boys, think away, and I drink to you.

“ Your affectionate

“ EXILE AT BRIGHTON.”

“ Oct. 25th.

“ King thought that something about *Edwin James* (scamp, who stands again for Marylebone), though perfectly true, was not in place in *P.*\* But I said I should touch many things of the sort, not proposing *P.* should be merely a tumbler.”

“ Oct. 28th.

“ Yates encloses a note from Edwin James, asking *Y.*'s intercession with *Punch*. James has the cheek to stand for Marylebone. Says Press attacks increase his supporters, but give pain to his 'aged relatives.' Told *Y.* that when *J.* is L.C.J., he will answer such a plea with ' You should have thought of that before.' ”

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\* Edwin James, the notorious defender of Dr. Simon Bernard in 1858, quondam recorder of Brighton and M.P. for Marylebone, later a bankrupt and disbarred for unprofessional conduct, had retired for ten years to America and practised at the New York Bar. Now he was back again in London, making a hand-to-mouth living out of the unwary, and seeking the suffrages of his old electors. Shirley did not spare him, and “ Edwin James in Error ” appeared in *Punch* for Oct. 25th. The nature of his castigation may be gathered from the following sentences: “ Mr. Edwin James must not presume too far on his own abjectness. . . . The man whom the judges have unanimously refused to re-admit to the Bar is not the man whom any English constituency can return to Parliament. Edwin James's return to England is not an event on which, as far as we can see, any person or community is to be congratulated, but his return to Parliament would be a catastrophe which we decline to contemplate as possible in even the most Marylebonish of Boroughs.”

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

S. B. TO MISS MATTHEWS.

“ Oct. 26th, '73.

“ I beheld two acts of ‘ Richelieu ’ last night. I could not have supposed Irving to be so detestably bad. Shriek, rant, vulgarity of conception. House crammed, but not, I am glad to say, enthusiastic, tho’ the usual calls were performed. We heard Bateman himself applauding Isabel ‘ like mad.’\* Beautifully got up, nothing could be better. Trollope shouted after me at the G. yesterday to tell me that in the *Graphic* the artist, not being able to draw horses, has introduced a picnic with champagne into the middle of a chapter about a fox chase ! ”

S. B. TO MISS MATTHEWS.

“ Nov. 2nd, 1873.

“ I called on Henry James yesterday wanting to consult him about Reginald. I found the Solicitor G. in a state, for he has *got* to be Attorney-General. He had just had a telegram saying that Bovill† had died. *His* office is so good a one, that Coleridge it is thought must have it. Now James has £6,000 a year and extras, and would have liked to enjoy this and the dignity for a bit, without the terrific work of the other office, which will in future be only £7,000 and extras. He declared he would blow his brains out, but he has too many to do that.”

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\* H. L. Bateman was manager of the “ Lyceum ” at this time, and Miss Isabel Bateman was acting the part of *Julie*. Irving’s acting of *Richelieu* was dealt with very severely in next week’s *Punch*, *vide* Nov. 1st, p. 177.

† Sir William Bovill, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, succeeded by Sir John (Lord) Coleridge, who in his turn was succeeded as Attorney-General by Sir Henry (Lord) James.

“WHEN YOU MUST, YOU’D BETTER”

S. B. TO MISS FERGUSSON.

“6 KENT TERRACE,

“REGENT’S PARK,

“N.W.

“*Sunday.*”

“MY DEAR KATE,

“You will receive this on the morning of your birthday. I send you some rhymes, but I must also send you, in the hope that you will care more for *that*, a line to assure you how sincerely and heartily I congratulate you, and hope for all kinds of happiness for you.

“We are just going off to dine with Mrs. Keeley, and it is a nice-looking night to go out in. I suppose the weather is just a judgment on us for fracturing the Sawbath, as we say in the north.

\* \* \* \*

“O, one word more. This is the crest and motto of a Scots lady with whom I had some correspondence in the holidays.

(Here is pasted in a crest with the motto :—

“When you must  
You’d better.”)

“It’s too pert to be old, but it is rather funny. She asked me for an autograph, so I naturally sent her one abusing Burns.

“Once more and always

“Yours most faithfully,

“SHIRLEY BROOKS.”

These were the lines enclosed :—

“A BIRTHDAY ACROSTIC.

“Take the name of an actor so great and so small, (K ea N)  
What certain folks make about nothing at all, (A d O)  
What’s as needful at breakfast as coffee, or *lait*, (T ime S)  
What we speak with when meaning that folks (E mphasi S)  
should obey,



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

The French for a fool, and the Scotch for unsober, (F o U)  
 A little Scots isle, precious cold in October, (E i G)  
 What a horse should not be, or in racing he'll lag, (R oare R)  
 What Aberdeen's made of, the spoil of the crag,~ (G ranit E)  
 That of which Mr. Mill (see his ' Life ' ) appears vain, (U nbelie F)  
 A specimen (in the Comparative, work (S ampl E)  
 Young ladies were, once, not permitted to shirk),  
 A royal Scots House that won't govern again, (S tuar T)  
*Nom de plume* of a lady whose writings are bold, (O uid A)  
*Nom pour rive* of a gentleman known as ' the old,' (N ic K)  
 Take the initials and finals, those down and these  
     up,  
 With the best mountain dew fill the best silver cup,  
 And drink to the health of the Lady whose name  
 Her Poet (Immortal) delivers to Fame,  
 And wishes her, *plus* all good things of this earth,  
 Many happy returns of the day of her birth.

" SHIRLEY BROOKS.

" *Monday, 3rd Nov., 1873.*"

It will be noticed that lines nine and twelve rhyme,  
 whereas the rest of the acrostic is in rhyming couplets.  
 The above is as it was sent corrected a day or two later,  
 when he wrote : " I find I *mulled* the acrostic . . .  
 accept all apology for my carelessness. My only  
 excuse is that I was very much occupied on the day  
 I wrote, and that is no excuse at all."

" *Nov. 8th.* (Diary.)

" The former (Miss ' Torie ' Matthews) bought for  
 me at Brighton a magic inexhaustible inkstand, to  
 work for 100 years—longer than I shall want it, espe-  
 cially as Dr. Johnson's ' odd thought ' goes—no letters  
 in the grave.

\* \* \* \*

" Note from Christie with this from Sir Mordaunt  
 Wells, ' Miss C. Baynes and all Harrogate are raving

## A GOOD STORY ABOUT DELANE

about S. B. There never was a man so much liked—you may tell him so. I don't know him myself.' I believe I was tolerably civil to most of them—not all."

" *Nov. 9th.*

" Heard a good story about Billy Russell and Delane. W. R., D., Lord Hartington\*, and others, were in a railway carriage, and some dispute arose about some date. R. affirmed that he *knew*, having made an entry in his diary. This was in his travelling case, and he produced it. He found the page, but not being able to read—his glass having slipped into his trousers—he gave it to Delane to read, who read ' John Delane tells me so and so, but then he is such a d——d liar that one doesn't know,' etc. This Delane showed to Lord Hartington. However, it passed, and Russell has since dined with Delane."

" *Nov. 22nd.*

" Disraeli quoted some Greek at Glasgow on Wednesday. King thought from Sophocles, so did Rego, but neither knew whence. I ran it down in Potter next day. ' Ajax,' speech of Teucer, after the suicide."

" *Nov. 25th.*

" Good story about the Queen, who, speaking of Dilke†, wondered he was so averse to monarchy. ' I have had him on my lap. I have stroked his hair. I suppose I stroked it the wrong way.' "

At the beginning of December a " breeze " arose between Shirley and the management of the *Illustrated London News*. It was of short duration, but blew fairly hard whilst it lasted. I group the allusions from the diary, which show Shirley in one of his rare, but none the less real, prickly moods.

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\* Now Duke of Devonshire.

† The present baronet.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

with the 'Strangers.' However, I was in pretty good form, talked chaff, and called mountains excrescences on the beautiful face of Nature, which elicited what Hardman in his report called good-humoured derisive cheers. Said I had seen Lebanon and Etna but never an Alp, but had read of Alp the Renegade, and Clan Alpine, and so on. It did. They smoke 'as soon as the Queen is polished off,' as Hardy reverently put it."

" Dec. 19th.

"To the Gaiety, to see the 'Hypocrite,' which is drawing great houses. The orchestra itself is made into stalls. I do not know what draws the people, the play is an anachronism, and badly acted, except by Phelps—Toole's *Mawworm* may amuse some folks but it is bad. Miss Farren is a mere soubrette as *Charlotte*. Phelps is impressive, there is backbone in his acting, and the non-hypocrite scenes were very good indeed. When did I see this play last? At Drury Lane, I think, with Dowton."

### S. B. TO MISS MATTHEWS.

" Dec. 20th, 1873.

"I saw most of the 'Hypocrite.' I do not know what draws the people. The house was full to the brim. Phelps is not *unctuous* enough, but showed power, and was like an artist among the duffers around him. E. Farren is a mere soubrette. *Charlotte* should be a lady. Besides, she talks through her nose, which is well enough in burlesque, but not in comedy. Toole made nothing of *Mawworm*. I did not think he could be so inefficient, and the buffoonery at the end is contemptible. The rest were as heavy as lead, but Miss Loseby did the dangerous scene with Cantwell better than I expected."

## HIS LAST CHRISTMAS DINNER

S. B. TO PERCIVAL LEIGH.

“ ‘ PUNCH ’ OFFICE,

“ 27th Dec., 1873.

“ There, my dear Leigh, I have just made up the New Year's number. A select lot dine at the Bedford on Monday, as we all are more or less engaged afterwards, so we hope you'll drink our healths, and we shall do the same by you and yours. I hope you enjoyed your Xmas day. We dined with my old friends, the Matthews's (*Grindlay & Co.*'s house, a name known in Southampton), and were very merry, and I uttered versicles which I had made for the occasion, and they were received with rapture, and their printing was demanded ; that you may see how entirely they deserve that glory, I send you a specimen. This was the verse for a lovely little girl, who is a wonderful subduer of animals :—

“ ‘ No rhyme, the bard saith'll  
Fit dear little Ethel,  
Who tames every quadruped under her care.  
Some day she will tame  
A tall biped we'll name  
At a one o'clock breakfast in Manchester Square.’

Nineteen verses of the same kind. I bet *you* didn't exert yourself so much for the delectation of your party. We luckily got a sober cabman, although it was Xmas day, or night, so we got home in peace and joy. I have some friends coming to me on the Eve, but we make it a *supper* this time, as a dinner, even beginning at 8.30, drags if you want to hear the Bells. We've tried various ways ; this is an experiment.

“ Nobody here to-day. W. B. came for an hour, but is gone back to Clapham. Drury Lane pantomime

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## SHIRLEY BROOKS

*very bad* this year, I heard to-day from folks who were there; Covent Garden better, but foggy. I suspect that if one wants the old fun, one should go to the Surrey. The night before Boxing Night, they played their pantomime there, and there were so many hitches that the house howled, and the manager came forward in the greatest of rages, and told them that they must know this could be only a rehearsal, and if they didn't stop their d——d noises he'd drop the curtain. Serve 'em right. The cads were hushed instanter.

"I don't know why I inflict all this scrawl on you, but it seems natural to finish off the week's work with a handshake with you. All good wishes for a happy new year to you and Fred, and Mrs. Leigh, and (respectful) salutes to the young ladies from the aged Editor.

"Ever yours,  
"S. B."

On Dec. 31st the last of the feasts was given at which Shirley was to gather round him his friends "to see the Old Year out and the New Year in."

Present were the Burnands, S. L. Clemens (Mark Twain), Arthur Cecil, the Crowdys, the du Mauriers, the Friths, the Hardmans, the Jerrolds, Mrs. Keeley, the Matthews's, Mr. J. C. Parkinson, Mr. Sambourne, (Sir John) Tenniel, Mr. Horace Voules, Mrs. Montagu Williams, and the Yates's. Irving and Farren were prevented from coming at the last moment.

"Somehow," he wrote in his diary, "I did not fancy we were so jolly as usual," notwithstanding the fact that "Mark Twain proposed the host and hostess in a very funny little speech."

D.G.

Then comes the last sentence in this the last of his diaries :—

“ I believe that it was only my fancy that made me think our supper less effective than our other gatherings have been. To bed at 2.30, and all thanks where all should be paid for all the mercies of the year.”

## CHAPTER XX

1874—Last Days—Death.



**HEN** Shirley began the year 1874 by posting up at the end of his last year's diary the names of those who, during the past twelve months, had gone "*ad Majores*" — James Hannay, Lord Lytton, Charles Knight, Macready, Emmanuel Deutsch, Thornton Hunt, Samuel Wilberforce, Lord Westbury, Landseer, and twenty others, little did he guess how soon he was to join the silent company. For the moment life seemed strong in him, as strong, that is to say, as it had been since he had received the sharp warning of four years before. Fortunately for him there was to be no long tottering on the brink of the grave. It was his happiness that the hour struck whilst work was doing, whilst the harness was still on his back.

On the first night of the New Year he represented *Punch* at the Drury Lane Pantomime, taking the place of Mr. (now Sir Francis) Burnand, who was delivering some of his "Happy Thoughts" at the New Gallery in

## PROFESSOR OWEN'S "DODLET"

rgyll Street. He was in his jolliest mood and rote :—

“ . . . The gem of the pantomime is a little song by two little ladies . . . who have a good deal to say, or rather sing, about ‘Living on Buttercup Green.’ This is as charming a tiny *pastorale* as can be imagined. . . . When the small lovers slowly and caressingly glided round together with looks of earnest belief in the fool’s paradise they had been singing about, *Mr. Punch* declared that this five minutes would have paid him for coming to the theatre in the ramshackliest of cabs, with a horse that tumbled down . . . in Leicester Square, and with a cabman whom he had to offer to fight for the overcharge. Of course, he came in no such way, but in an air-tight brougham, with furs on his knees, and behind two fiery steeds—by the way, he apologizes to the fat swell he knocked down in Hayer Street, and will thank the executors of the people-woman whom he ran over in Long Acre to call at his office with probate of her will, when he will make in addition to her residuary estate.” And so on, and so on, playing the fool in the most delightful manner possible.

Then, when this was done, he sets himself to write the delightful verses entitled “The Dodo Demolished,”\* inspired by a letter to the *Times* from Professor Owen, who denied that a live specimen of the Dodo had been discovered in the Samoan Islands, and declared that it was only a “dodlet!”

Then he sat down to write to Percival Leigh, who was out of town, and of course wanted to know all about everything.

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\* *Punch*, Jan. 10th, p. 19.



## SHIRLEY BROOKS

the editor was overwhelmed with work and the man was ready to throw down his pen for very weariness.

In the early part of the month he had threatenings of his old trouble, but stuck resolutely to his work, as indeed he did to the end.

Later he dined at the Frith's. "I well remember the night," writes his host. "He looked tired and seemed out of spirits, his appetite failed, and he left early. I never saw him again."

Then Reginald records in his diary, "The Governor (has) got a nasty sort of cough." Two days later the "Governor" is "very seedy." But he is not too "seedy" to write to Hepworth Dixon about his new book, "The History of Two Queens":—

"MY DEAR HEPWORTH,

"Many thanks for the two ladies you have sealed to me.\* Always welcome as your books are to me they are particularly so this week, when I am shut up to cure one of those infernal colds that come of our climate, and balance constitution, free press, enlightened Shirkey Class and all the rest of our blessings. I am glad indeed to have something to read worth reading and printed in an *audible* type. . . .

"Ever yours,  
"S. B."

Two days later (the 5th), "the Governor is much worse," and the doctor, Owen Rees, is called in. On the 10th the sick man writes a humorous letter to his colleague who has been suffering from a sharp attack of eczema, oblivious of the fact that "one thorn of experience is worth a whole wilderness of warning."

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\* Referring to Brigham Young's wives who were "sealed" to him.

## LAST ILLNESS

S. B. TO (SIR) F. C. BURNAND.

" 6 KENT TERRACE,  
" REGENT'S PARK,  
" N.W.  
" Monday, 10th Feb.  
" 4 p.m.

" DEAR FRANK,

" Costume, a pair of breeches, but not pulled up and fastened, a plaid scarf, a light shawl and a big red quilt. Seat, easy chair by fire in bedroom. State of mind—offensive. State of body—legs rather swollen, incessant korf, and touch of bronchitis. Liquor, lemonade all day, a glass of hock at dinner. Cigar not forbidden, which is mean, because I don't care about it in the least.

" *Ubi lapsus, quid feci?* But I think—I say I *think* that I would have *an extra week* of this sort of thing, if I could thereby buy you six weeks of immunity from what you tell me of. However, you are young, and have time for a dozen ventures. It is most irritating at a time when all is going so well. I fancy, too, that you would find things lighter if you went to bed a little earlier and a great deal straighter. You, I fear, make your evening a Jolly one, like that of any other roysterer,—'O, let's go and hear Burnand and then to Evans's!' Now *don't*. Let not even Sambo lead you astray.

" Poor dear Rosie.\* I am indeed grieved to hear about that. You or I would go about mad with such a thing; but somehow Nature gives the women a power of enduring martyrdom—and it does away with the crown.

" Don't trouble about thinking of coming to see me. In fact, the Doctors would rather I saw nobody, as

---

\* Mrs. Burnand.

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

when the hand was stiffening in death, when the brain that had imagined them had already ceased to think."

On Feb. 20th comes the last pathetic entry :—

" Papa had an awful bad night, and telegraphed for Barker who came at one o'clock, and gave us hope. I telegraphed for Cecil. Rees came in the afternoon ; did not give us hope, in fact very desponding ; he is very fond of Papa. Mrs. Smith, Lady Thompson, A. T., and Irving here. M. broke down utterly before the latter, but he was very kind. Alma Tademas called. Had to do the *H.N. Leader*. Papa, ill as he was, finished it off with a pencil on his knees *splendidly*. Rees came again at 8 and was more cheering, for he says he is no worse, and with Time we can do everything. The *Lancet* says recovery is hopeless, and it is in the *Echo*. I hope to God it don't get in the Mornings. I wish people would mind their own business, and if they want to know how he is come to 6 K. T."

Two days later a friend asks the sick man how he is and he says, with a pathetic attempt at gaiety, " I am *Bright* to-day but shall be *Low* to-morrow." Then a persistent newspaper man calls again. " Tell him," he says, with a shrewd smile, " that he shall have his ' par ' all in good time."

On the morning of the 23rd he looks over the forthcoming number of *Punch*, and makes some suggestions. A boy is waiting below for " copy." Shirley writes a small make-up paragraph, asks for a cigar, takes a couple of whiffs, "*looks very surprised*,"\* and falls back dead.

---

\* Mrs. Brooks's own words to Mrs. Panton.

## DEATH

"He was," wrote Blanchard Jerrold, "at peace with all the world. He had blessed his wife for the loving care with which she had watched over him. His boys were at home with him. And he turned gently on his side, and fell into his long sleep, leaving hosts of friends to mourn him, and not an enemy that I ever heard of, to assail his memory."

It was the same kindly pen which wrote in the *Gentleman's Magazine* :—

"Some, I trust many, under whose eyes these lines will fall will remember Shirley Brooks in his latter days, when the hard-fought fight had been won, and he had come out of it, his whitening hair being the only scars of the struggle. He never looked braver, handsomer, nor happier. He was as deep in his books, as familiar with his ink, as ever ; but now he had his acknowledged place in the literature which he loved. The steel at Napoleon's side was the same on the eve of the battle as on the morrow of victory ; but on the morrow it was the sword of Austerlitz. How cheerily and kindly, in the heyday of his complete success, Shirley Brooks gathered his circle of friends about him, none who ever stood under his roof-tree will forget. That was a pleasant house in Kent Terrace, by Regent's Park, where so many men whose names are household words were wont to gather and be wisely merry. How many years have I seen out and in, sitting with hosts of friends round the mahogany tree of our dear friend ! How many times has his manly and kindly voice said, ' God bless you all ' to us, as the bells of the New Year broke through the stillness of midnight ! He stood at the head of his table last New Year's Eve, his friends crowded about him—the background his books and pictures ; watch in hand. His happy English face,

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

ennobled with silver hair, never looked fuller of the intellectual light that he had trimmed and burned—a student always—for nearly forty years. I remember that a sad feeling came upon me as I gazed at him, with his watch in his hand, counting the dying seconds of the last New Year's Eve he was destined to see. For he reminded me of my father in his study at Kilburn Priory, on *his* last New Year's Eve, when he spoke so solemnly and slowly, as though, in the midst of our revel, Death had whispered to him. The scattered flakes of white hair were the chief resemblance between the two; and it was these that revived the old scene in my mind—for I was struck with what appeared to me to be the almost sudden whiteness of my friend. . . .”

On the Saturday following his death they laid him to rest in Kensal Green Cemetery hard by the graves of Leech and Thackeray. And all who stood round confessed that, perilous as is the vocation of the satirical writer, none had borne himself through its unguessed-at difficulties with greater justice, self-respect and courage than the man at whose loss they were so profoundly moved. Socially and professionally his death had made a gap that it would be hard to fill. A brilliant writer, a witty *raconteur*, his cordiality and heartiness had never been soured by illness or age into cynicism or disparagement. Loving the applause and affection of his fellows, he never lost his independence or truckled to the great and powerful. Weaknesses he had, and no attempt has been made to conceal them in these pages. But surely there is something of nobility to be found there too, or I have signally failed in showing the man as he really was.

## THE GREAT ADVENTURE

More than the adumbration of a life no biographer has ever yet set down since the world began. The best that can be hoped is that we have caught some momentary and real glimpses of a fellow creature during this great terrestrial adventure upon which, in common with us, he was so desperately engaged.

*Punch* has been (and is) most fortunate in his editors, and yet I fancy none will gainsay what was written in the pages Shirley loved above all others :—

“ No better wish can be offered to his successors than that they may be guided by as fine a taste, as clear a judgment, and as well-directed sympathy, as was Shirley Brooks.”

Some persons profess to find it shocking that a man should pass into the presence of his Maker, as they call it, straight from writing epigrams for *Punch*. The same people are never tired of saying that we are *always* in God's presence. Should we then strike working when we find ourselves on the threshold of the Black Door we call Death, which on these persons' own showing does *not* divide us from our Maker? True, there are tremendous Possibilities on the thither side. There is a world of Mystery. There is the rest of the Pattern which we have been blindly working at during our lives. And who will venture to say that Shirley's wandering thread of tinsel was not necessary to the whole great pattern by which the well-and-truly-done of Humanity will eventually be judged? Certainly he was faithful over a few things. And he is in the hands of God.

There are but few more words to be said. Shirley

## SHIRLEY BROOKS

had made his will in April, 1873, leaving everything to his wife and appointing her sole executrix. He had insured his life for £4,000, and there was some £2,000 owing or standing to his account at his death. His old friends and comrades at once set to work and raised a subscription of £2,000 for his widow. Sala and Sir Benjamin Phillips, some time Lord Mayor of London, and a good friend to Shirley, took steps to get her a pension. Mrs. Brooks's name was at once put down on the Prime Minister's list. Two years later a grant was made of £100 per annum. This she lived to enjoy for four years. She died in May, 1880, and was buried beside her husband at Kensal Green.

Just one more man and woman had played their parts in the great adventure, and had slipped quietly out to their Rest beyond the Theatre of this mad world.

And what is the moral of Shirley Brooks's life—the moral that attaches to *Punch* himself? This, I think—that he and his colleagues and the paper which he loved so well did their wholesome part in helping the nineteenth century to laugh itself into sanity, when it was like to go melancholy mad under the teachings of its Ruskins, its Carlyles, and its other lesser pessimists.

## Appendix

The following entries appear under heading "Charles William Shirley Brooks," at the British Museum :

- 'Timour the Tartar,' by J. Oxenford and S. B. See Lacy (T. H.).  
Lacy's acting edition of Plays, etc. Vol. 49. 1850. 12mo.  
See *Periodical Publication*. London. *The Literary Gazette*, new series (edited successively by S. B., etc.). 1817. 4to.  
See *Periodical Publication*. London. "Punch or the London Charivari" (successively edited by Mark Lemon, Shirley Brooks, etc.). 1841, etc. 4to.  
See Reach (A. B.) and Brooks (C. W. S.). "A Story with a Vengeance." 1852. 8vo.  
'Amusing Poetry,' edited by S. B. London. 1857. 8vo.  
New edition. London. 1874. Part of Diprose's Railway Library.  
'Anything for a Change,' a *petite* comedy in one act (and in prose).  
See Lacy (T. H.), Lacy's acting edition of plays, etc. Vol. IV. 1850, etc. 12mo.  
Another edition. New York. 1872 (?). 8vo. In 114 of "De Witt's Acting Plays."  
'Aspen Court,' a story of our own time. Three vols. London. 1855. 12mo.  
New edition, revised. London. 1857. 8vo.  
Another edition, see Handy Volume Series. Handy Volume Series. 1868, etc. 8vo.  
"The Creole, or Love's Fetters," an original drama in three acts (and in prose). See Lacy (T. H.). Lacy's acting edition of plays, etc. Vol. I. 1850, etc. 12mo.



## APPENDIX

- "The Creole, or Love's Fetters," pp. 18. 1896. Dick's standard play No. 1009. 1883, etc. 8vo.
- "The Daughter of the Stars," a drama in two acts (and in prose). Lacy's acting edition of plays, etc., Vol. II. 1850, etc. 12mo.
- "The Exposition, a Scandinavian sketch, containing as much irrelevant matter as possible," in one act (and in verse), Lacy, Vol. III. 1850, etc. 12mo.
- "Follies of the Year," by John Leech. A series of coloured etchings from *Punch* Pocket-Books. 1844-64. With some notes by S. B. London. 1866. 4to.
- "The Gordian Knot," a story of good and evil, with illustrations by J. Tenniel, London. 1858-60.  
Another edition, Handy Volume Series. 1868, etc.
- "The Guardian Angel," a farce in one act (and in prose). Lacy, Vol. V. 1850. 12mo.
- "The Naggletons," and "Miss Violet and her 'Offers,'" etc. London, 1875. 8vo.
- "The Opera," "The Coulisses," "Foreign Gentlemen in London." See Smith (A. R.).
- "Gavarni in London." 1849.  
Another edition. See Smith (A. R.), "Sketches of London Life," etc. 1859. 8vo.
- "The Russians of the South." 1854. The Travellers' Library, etc. Vol. VI. 1856.
- "The Silver Cord," a story. Three vols. London. 1861.  
Another edition. Three vols. 1862.
- "Sooner or Later," with illustrations by G. du Maurier. London. 1868.
- "Wit and Humour." Poems from *Punch*. Edited by R. S. Brooks. London. 1875.
- "The Wigwam," a burletta, in one act (and in prose), etc. Dick's standard play No. 1004. 1883, etc.

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